

DEBORAH ROSS INTERVIEW

SUGGS: THE MADNESS OF MY YOUTH

MEDIA+

CAN COSMO GIRLS REALLY HAVE IT ALL?

ARTS

PATRICIA PONE TAKES THE REINS

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SPORT

Labour target better off to raise billions in tax

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor
Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, is expected to increase taxes for the better-off in his July Budget.

While Labour said in its manifesto that there was no question of increasing income tax rates, Mr Brown was careful not to tie his hands when it came to changing tax allowances.

The key loophole in the manifesto says the principles to be applied to tax policies will be "fair and be seen to be fair". The prime target for attack will be the fact that while millions of employees are on Pay As You Earn, hundreds of thousands of better-off people live on a "Pay If You Like" principle, strongly attacked in a Labour policy paper, *Looking to the Future*, in 1990.

It is estimated that more than £1bn could be raised by putting a £10,000 annual limit on the tax allowances that can be claimed by any one taxpayer. In 1992 635,000 taxpayers claimed total allowances and reliefs of more than £10,000.

Other options include restricting reliefs to the 25p income tax rate rather than the 40p top rate. Some Labour sources have their eyes on the £2.4bn mortgage interest relief, the £2.2bn relief for personal pension contributions, and the £8bn relief for occupational pensions.

Mr Brown's first Budget, expected on 1 July, will announce a windfall tax on privatised utilities and a reduction in VAT on domestic fuel to 5 per cent. The money raised from the windfall tax is earmarked for the "welfare to work" schemes to get about 250,000 young people into jobs.

Beyond those pledges, the Budget is likely to start shifting the burden of income tax with moves towards a starting rate of 10p for the low-paid. That could be financed by a clampdown on tax relief loopholes.

But yesterday's drama, as the new Government started to take shape, was centred on the appointment of Peter Mandelson to the post of Minister



Family worship: Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, leaving the St Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Highbury, London, after Sunday Mass

Photograph: PA

blair's britain

Welfare drive, page 5
Galaxy man goes to church, page 5

Mother and son's reunion, page 6
The new government, page 8

without Portfolio, hours after he had jumped the gun by revealing his powerful new role on Sky Television's *Sunday with Adam Boulton*.

Portraying himself as a New Labour commissioner, Mr Mandelson said: "I'm there to assist in the strategic implementation of our policies, to make sure our programme is kept on track and moving forwards, and to ensure that Government policies are effectively presented to the public and to the party."

He also said: "Heads of departments are very, very responsible people. They obviously have a great deal of

latitude day-to-day, but what they will be implementing and what they will be adhering to is the agreed programme of the party."

He said Mr Blair would want to create "a strong centre in government, so that all its various arms and departments have a very clear sense of their own direction, how they are go-

ing to form part of the overall picture, so that we can very rapidly start implementing and delivering what we stood for and what we pledged to the British people." The tone of Mr Mandelson's remarks is certain to annoy Cabinet ministers.

Mr Blair yesterday made three other ministerial appointments, two of them to

join Mr Brown at the Treasury. Geoffrey Robinson, the millionaire businessman, owner of the *New Statesman*, and MP for Coventry North-West, becomes Paymaster General, with responsibility for expanding the Public-Private Finance Initiative.

Kevin Liddell, an economist and MP for Airdrie and Shotts, becomes Minister of State at the Treasury. Doug Henderson, MP for Newcastle North, was appointed Minister for Europe yesterday. He hit the ground running last night with direct briefings from the Prime Minister and Robin Cook, the Foreign Sec-

retary, before embarking on his first ministerial negotiations in Strasbourg today. Mr Cook said yesterday: "At today's meeting, Britain will take the first step towards signing up to the Social Chapter."

Ministers to be appointed today are expected to include former education and employment spokesman Stephen Byers; former health spokeswoman Tessa Jowell; former employment spokesman in opposition Ian McCartney; former treasury spokesman Alan Milburn; and election campaign spokesman Brian Wilson.

Interest rate fears, page 17

Hague set to snatch Tory crown from heavyweights

Anthony Bevins
and Fran Abrams

William Hague, the Tories' child prodigy of the 1970s, last night looked set to snatch the Conservative leadership from under the noses of old-guard Cabinet heavyweights.

The former Secretary of State for Wales is the only challenger who can unite the warring factions among the 165 remaining Conservative MPs.

Well-informed sources said last night that Kenneth Clarke, who is standing but has no chance of winning, would move his support behind Mr Hague, 36, after a first ballot.

There was also speculation that Michael Heseltine, who withdrew after being admitted to hospital with chest pains on Saturday, might stand down as MP for Henley and allow Chris Patten to re-enter the Commons following his return from Hong Kong next month.

There has been strong criticism of Mr Major for his decision to "jump ship" so soon after last week's election débâcle, leaving the party to sink or swim. One senior source said it was an "unforgivable dereliction of duty for the leader to desert the party in its hour of need". It had been hoped he would stay on until the autumn in order to suppress left-right civil war in the party.

But friends of the former Prime Minister said that whatever Mr Major had done, the Euro-sceptics would have continued their open warfare. They were "uncontrollable" in government, had not stopped even during the election and it was no surprise they were now "at it again".

Peter Lilley became the second contender to declare his hand openly yesterday.

Michael Howard is almost

certain to stand, along with Mr Hague, Stephen Dorrell and John Redwood.

Mr Clarke promised free votes on all major European issues yesterday. "The troubles of the last two or three years have entirely been caused by Europe. It is a kind of cancer at the heart of the party. Some people are quite obsessed by it they are quite incapable of agreeing up to it," he said.

He did not expect to serve in a shadow cabinet headed by Mr Redwood, the Euro-sceptic former Welsh Secretary, he added.

Mr Redwood said the statement was just electioneering. Mr Clarke's "enormous style and aplomb" would be welcome in a Redwood cabinet. "I think Ken is saying that because he thinks that I may have a lot of support and he obviously wants to knock that support in his own interest, because he's a candidate and he's a bruiser," he said. It was "very likely" he would stand, he added.

Mr Lilley sought to present himself as a unity candidate, despite his Euro-sceptic views, but said the idea of free votes on Europe was "not realistic".

Mr Dorrell, speaking on GMTV, would not say whether he was going to run, but added: "This is an election process that is going to take some weeks and it's sensible to spend a few days thinking about the personal implications of what is potentially a prime ministerial post."

Mr Heseltine was expected to stay in Hertford General NHS trust until at least tomorrow, though his family said he was suffering from mild angina and his condition was not serious. He was not being allowed to watch the Conservative leadership race on television but was receiving visits.

QUICKLY

Clinton in Mexico

Bill Clinton begins a three-day trip to Mexico today, his first official visit as US President to a Latin American country. Drug smuggling and Mexican migrants to America will top the agenda in talks with President Ernesto Zedillo. Page 9

Helpgott sell-out

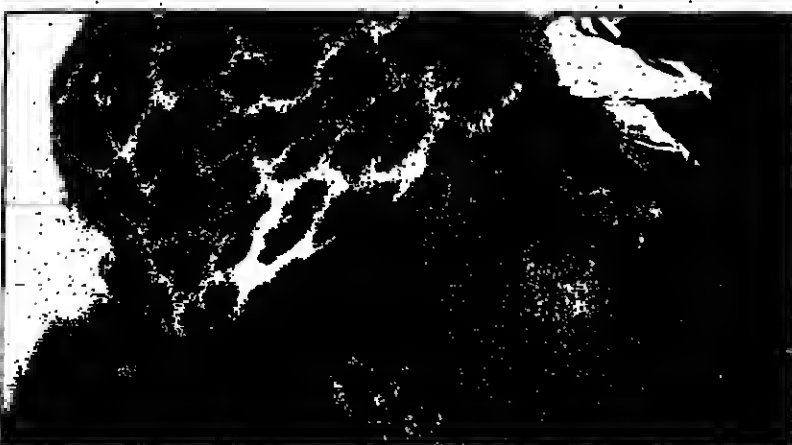
The Australian pianist, David Helfgott, made famous by the film *Shine*, was rehearsing in London yesterday in preparation for his sold-out concert at the Royal Festival Hall today. Helfgott's wife Gillian rebutted criticisms by his sister, brother and first wife that the film and the supposed battle with his father are travesties of the truth. Page 3

Capital frocks

London has become the most popular place for top fashion houses to open shops, with 35 designer stores opening since 1990. The capital has more designer floorspace planned for 1997-98 than Paris, Milan or Los Angeles. Armani and Hermès will also be opening stores in Manchester later this year. Page 3

Wider ring for Hamed

Las Vegas beckons featherweight Naseem Hamed after his 92-second destruction of the European champion Billy Hardy on Saturday. Sport Section, page 11



On his way out: President Mobutu feels the heat yesterday.

Mary Braid
on the SAS Outeniqua

The trademark leopardskin hat was the same, and he wore the same thick black glasses. But President Mobutu Sese Seko, 66, despot of Zaire and once one of Africa's most secure strong men, looked most uncertain and uncomfortable. His 32-year reign is coming to an end, and the fate of his vast nation - 10 times the size of Britain, with a population of 44 million - hangs in the balance.

Trapped in the blazing media lights on board the South African ship *Outeniqua*, Mr Mobutu picked the sticky tape attaching his name and title to the tablecloth desk. A few feet away on the other side of South African president Nelson Mandela sat Laurent Kabila, sleek and relaxed in the glare, the leader of the rebel army which has seized most of Zaire and is now advancing on the capital Kinshasa.

For the past seven months town after

town has fallen to Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, but until now Mr Mobutu had remained defiant.

Yesterday he began what he insisted he would not do: negotiating with the rebel king. And in their first joint communiqué, Mr Mobutu offered to relinquish power. Of course, the wily and corrupt politician attached some strings. But according to South African government sources last night Mr Mobutu had agreed quietly and secretly to stand down. His imminent departure was the one thing the warring sides agreed on at an event that was more important for its symbolism than its substance. An era was coming to an end.

"President Mobutu knows he is going, and he is going soon," said an aide of UN envoy Mohamed Salimoun yesterday just before talks began. "It's just a question of going with some dignity." Some might suggest that with his bank accounts, his house in the South of France, his years

End of era as Zaire's despot Mobutu agrees to stand down

of corruption, dignity was the last thing he deserved.

The ship was originally suggested as a piece of diplomatic legerdemain because the warring sides could not agree on a mainland African venue. Yet the meeting only took place after two days of farcical mutual avoidance.

On Friday, President Mobutu, stricken with prostate cancer, was almost prevented from taking part by the difficulty of boarding. The *Outeniqua* then set sail for its rendezvous point with Mr Kabila in international waters. But the rebel leader came up with a string of new objections. President Mandela and his deputy, Thabo Mbeki, spent all day Saturday trying to bring the two men together. It took an outburst of temper from President Mandela on Saturday night to make the meeting happen. And so, yesterday afternoon, the dictator and the rebel at last met in a tiny cabin five decks below the bridge.

They outlined positions which remained far apart. Mr Kabila demanded that Mr Mobutu hand over power to his rebel alliance and allow it to decide who forms an interim transition authority. He said he had ordered his troops to stop their advance on Kinshasa, but he made it clear there would be no ceasefire until Mr Mobutu stood down. For his part, Mr Mobutu said he would only step down when a ceasefire had been agreed, a transmission of authority established and elections held for president.

The two sides agreed to meet in eight to ten days, at a venue yet to be decided. But a South African aide said that behind the scenes, there had been more progress. The international community is desperate to prevent a bloody battle for Kinshasa and avoid the possible disintegration of Zaire. But Mr Kabila's forces seem unstoppable; and on yesterday's evidence, Mr Mobutu is finished.

Zaire revolution, pages 10 and 11

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Irish government steps up pressure for IRA ceasefire

The Irish government yesterday stepped up pressure for a new IRA ceasefire in the wake of Labour's landslide election win in Britain. The call came from Proinsias de Rossa, the senior Cabinet minister who heads the Democratic Left, part of John Bruton's three-party coalition administration. Mr de Rossa said all the pieces were falling into place to move forward the Northern Ireland peace process. But, he added, the crucial missing element was an IRA ceasefire. Mr de Rossa urged Sinn Féin's two new Westminster MPs, the party's leader Gerry Adams and its senior strategist Martin McGuinness, to exert all possible pressure on the IRA to "call an immediate, total and unconditional cessation of all violence".

Speaking ahead of an expected first post-election meeting in London this week between Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Mr Bruton, Mr de Rossa said: "A new Labour government in Britain, with an authoritative political mandate, a new and energetic Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in Mo Mowlam, and the impressive mandate won by David Trimble and the Ulster Unionist Party in the elections, are all grounds for optimism."

Channel blockade may be called off

Freight companies and ferry operators were hoping yesterday that Bank Holiday disruption of cross-Channel routes could be averted as French lorry drivers reached a deal with government officials just hours before a threatened ports blockade.

A P&O Ferries spokeswoman said they had been told that most of the unions had reached agreement with the French government and the planned day of action looked likely to be called off.

"One or two unions are still planning to strike [today]," she said, "but we are optimistic that they will reach agreement and that there will be no blockade. ... We are telling day-trippers to turn up as usual." The lorry drivers were planning to strike over pension and retirement rights and had threatened to blockade all the main French ports today. A similar strike last year brought chaos to the Continent and Britain. Freight operators are still waiting for compensation from the French government.

TV star 'Flipper' dies in Miami



Bebe, the last of seven bottlenose dolphins (left) that starred in the *Flipper* television series, has died. She was 40. The dolphin died "of old age" last week at the Miami Seaquarium where she was born in 1956. Atlantic bottlenose dolphins typically live 25 to 35 years. MGM-TV's *Flipper*, a spin-off from two films, aired on NBC from 1964 to 1967, with the dolphins playing alongside actors Brian Kelly, Tommy Norden and Luke Halpin.

Football fans sing to a holy tune

It was a friendly fixture if ever there was one. For the thousands of supporters who turned out at yesterday's match at Everton Football Club in Liverpool were all cheering on the same side.

And what is more, they were singing hymns. It was, in fact, a recording of BBC's *Songs of Praise*, entitled "Mersey Glory" and set for broadcast on 18 May. Among the hymns sung from the terraces were *Abide with Me*, *Mine eyes have seen the Glory*, and *Amazing Grace*. It was the programme's second fixture at a football club; the first was held in September 1994 at Old Trafford, home to Manchester United.

Clare Garner

Wallabies warm to Britain

Wallabies, the sun-loving marsupials from Australia, are in the midst of a population boom due to the variable British weather.

The warmer climate has encouraged wallabies brought over here in the Sixties to breed and become neighbours with British fauna. One wildlife expert said: "Wallabies come from arid semi-desert areas and cannot normally survive in cold countries. Their success indicates how much the British climate has changed in the past few years." There are believed to be at least a dozen colonies, varying in size from 12 to 120 animals. Fourteen wallabies were recently found feeding near Middleton in Teesdale on the County Durham-Cumbrian border. The creatures, a popular target for game hunters, have also been reported in the vicinity of Newcastle Airport.

Winning Lottery numbers

One winner scooped the £9,512,277 National Lottery jackpot on Saturday, with the winning numbers 29, 40, 35, 20, 06 and 31. The bonus ball was 21.

people



David Helfgott: Performances have been lauded around the world. (Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra)

Helfgott's wife hits back as pianist gets ready to shine

The David Helfgott show flew into Britain yesterday with a pre-concert performance by his wife Gillian, who told the press how her husband's first wife had given him the two-and-a-half-unhappy years of his life.

The Australian pianist, made famous by the film *Shine*, was rehearsing in London in preparation for his sold-out concert at the Royal Festival Hall today.

Helfgott, who was unknown in Britain this time last year, now has an album at the top of the classical charts, following the Oscar-winning account of his mental breakdown and conflict with his father.

Since then, his sister, brother - and yesterday his first wife - have all given interviews saying the film and the supposed battle with his father are travesties of the truth.

Helfgott allowed journalists to sit in on one of his final rehearsals as he casually performed his signature tune, Rachmaninov's third piano concerto.

Characteristically stooped, the musician muttered unceasingly to himself as he played the piece, which the film has already made a best-seller in 12 countries. "Shoulders hunched, he smiled and sang to himself while playing Liszt, as he apparently does on stage. He then stopped, and shook hands with all the cameramen."

Next door, his wife was rebutting criticisms of her husband's life story. And she rebutted them most vigorously. She said: "With *Shine* David was able to share the story of his pain. He loved his father very much and

his father loved him, but perhaps not wisely. The film has given him this new sense of self-awareness, self-respect and strength, and he is surrounded by love."

"I have been referred to as controlling David. Whoever wrote that, I just wish they could give me some clues how to do it."

Asked why his first wife was written out of the script of *Shine* and is not mentioned in Helfgott's biographical highlights, issued to the press, yesterday, she responded: "It was probably two-and-a-half of the unhappiest years of David's life. When she had an operation she put him in a psychiatric hospital. When she came to collect him he told her he would rather stay in the hospital."

"I think is a fair indication of the standard of the marriage."

His manager announced that Helfgott had already been greeted by innumerable packed concert halls and 72 standing ovations during his tour and said he would be returning to England for more later this year.

In what promoters are billing as "the biggest engagement of his life", Helfgott will be back in October to play the Rachmaninov piece again at the Royal Albert Hall, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

In 1970, after performing the same music at the same London venue, illness descended upon Helfgott and he retreated to spend years in mental institutions. It was only in 1984 that he returned to the concert platform.

David Lister

Ringo's derelict birthplace could be listed building

Such is the power of celebrity, Ringo Starr's birthplace is little more than a shack: corrugated iron covers the doors, the roof leaks and the toilet is smashed - but English Heritage said yesterday the derelict Liverpool terrace house could become a listed building.

For the rundown former home of the Beatles drummer (right, with his wife, Barbara) at 9 Madryn Street could be considered to be of special "historic interest", according to officials.

An application would be considered "very seriously" and, if successful, would make it the first birthplace of a living person to be listed. The house in Toxteth was bought for £13,200 at an auction in March and the new owner, Cliff Cooper, said he wanted it as a lasting tribute to the band.

Mr Cooper, who had not seen the house before he bought it, said: "It's in a terrible state, the ceiling is falling in, and it's quite a sight, but the aim is to get it listed."

English Heritage, which assesses listings claims, said Ringo's house was likely to be a ground-breaking case.

"The impact of the Beatles on late 20th-century British culture is so huge, I would have thought it was an interesting case and we



would look at it very, very seriously indeed," said Martin Cherry, head of listing. "Since it raises a particular issue, to commemorate people who are still alive, we would probably take it to one of our internal committees."

The Secretary of State for Heritage considers a building for listing if it displays "important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history", according to English Heritage. The auction catalogue claimed that baby Ringo was hidden in a cupboard under the stairs during an air raid.

Mr Cooper, managing director of World of Music shops, said the house would be let. He hoped to have a plaque on an outside wall showing its significance, but promised not to increase the rent because of its past.

Celebration as gypsy honoured

Thousands of gypsies danced and sang flamenco in St Peter's Square in Rome yesterday to honour Cefino Jimenez Malla, the first gypsy to be beatified by the Catholic church.

"He died for his faith", the Pope said in a ceremony broadcast yesterday on Spanish television. The gypsies then presented the Pope with an ebony stick, as a symbol of honour.

Jimenez Malla, known as El Pele, was shot dead at the age of 75 during the Spanish Civil War in Huesca, Aragon, in August 1936. He refused to renounce his faith in exchange for the promise of freedom from a friendly anarchist chaplain, said Monsignor Giovanni Chelli, president of the Pastoral Commission for Migrants and Itinerants.

"Cefino rejected the offer, knowing the price he would have to pay. With his rosary in his hand, he shouted 'Long live Christ the King' and faced his martyrdom."

The gypsy community has mixed feelings about El Pele's progress to sainthood. Whilst proud that one of their number has at last been honoured, some regard yesterday's gesture as a long overdue atonement for past injustices many gypsies feel they have suffered at the hands of the church.

Elizabeth Nash

Top Gun pilot feared exposure of gay affair

Craig Button, the US Air Force pilot who crashed into a mountain range for no apparent reason, was reportedly afraid that his gay affair with another pilot would be made public.

Leaked details of reports compiled by accident investigators indicate that Captain Button feared that he would be dismissed from the military because of the relationship.

During a training exercise last month, the 33-year-old, who had followed a childhood dream to become a USAF "Top Gun", broke formation with two other tankbuster A-10 aircraft and flew off towards mountains in Colorado.

For two weeks, the American authorities were unable to trace the plane and could only report that

the aircraft appeared to have vanished without a trace.

The wreckage of the \$6m jet, which was loaded with four high-explosive bombs, was finally found on the 13,000-foot Gold Dust Peak. Captain Button had made no attempt to eject.

Investigators reportedly believe that Captain Button had planned the crash and intended to die at a place bearing his own forename and the name of his home state. They think he intended to crash into Craig Peak on New York Mountain, which was immediately behind Gold Dust Peak.

The pilot was buried last week at a military cemetery in New York.

Ian Burrell

briefing

SOCIETY

Majority not offered Parental leave schemes

Employees in 97 per cent of workplaces are missing out on the benefits of parental leave schemes, according to a new survey. Launched on the first "Parenting Day" the report from the Demos think-tank found that only 3 per cent of British organisations offered leave which allowed both men and women to spend time with their families at the birth of a child.

Asked why this was the case, 37 per cent of firms said there was little demand from staff and one in six said that it was either too expensive or that the benefits would not justify the cost. Factors that would make firms consider changing their policies would be parliamentary or EU legislation. Only 28 per cent cited pressure from their employees.

Yet the move would be popular - an early survey showed that 64 per cent of people believe men should be entitled to full parental leave and 80 per cent believe firmly that life is suffering because of long hours of work.

"Demos has registered National Parenting Day on the May Bank Holiday (traditionally workers day) in order to focus government and businesses alike on the issues around enabling employees to balance work and family", said Helen Wilkinson, Demos' project director.

Parental Leave: The Price of Family Values?, £4.95, from Demos. Tel: 0171 353 4479. Glenda Cooper

HEALTH

Back pain linked to stress at work

Work can be a pain in the back if you are unhappy and under stress, a research study has shown. General dissatisfaction with work and a feeling of not being in control may contribute to as many as a quarter of all new cases of lower back pain in Britain, it is claimed.

The findings are based on a survey of 4,500 adults in south Manchester, which also revealed a link between back pain and depression. Up to one in six people who developed low back pain previously showed signs of depression and psychological distress.

Professor Alan Silman, who led the team at the ARC Epidemiology Unit at Manchester University, said researchers were surprised to find that physical factors like lifting and carrying were not as important in developing back pain as psychological and social factors.

The team urged employers to improve both the environment and human relations in the workplace. Their report says lower back pain affects 40 per cent of adults.

LEISURE

Japan is costliest for filmgoers

Tourists with a yen for filmgoing in Japan could find their leisure hours burning a hole in their pockets. The Land of the Rising Sun is easily the most expensive country to buy a cinema ticket, according to *Business Traveller* magazine.

Screen fans in Japan have to fork out an average of £10.75 for a cinema ticket - a far higher cost than the £3.21 paid by cinema-goers in Switzerland, which has the second most expensive tickets.

Of the 12 major countries in the magazine's list, Britain is in 11th place, with tickets costing an average £4.90.

The cheapest place to see a film is South Africa, where tickets cost just £2.59.

Cinema ticket prices around the world	
1. Japan	£10.75
2. Switzerland	£8.21
3. Germany	£5.58
4. France	£5.48
5. Australia	£5.53
6. Brazil	£4.96
7. Britain	£4.90
8. Russia	£4.89
9. Hong Kong	£4.71
10. USA	£4.41
11. Singapore	£3.31
12. South Africa	£2.59

TRANSPORT

Road rage should be a crime

Nearly all motorists think road rage should become a statutory offence, according to a survey published today. A crackdown on aggressive drivers is backed by 93 per cent, while 92 per cent think driving is more stressful than it was a decade ago.

The survey, from the RAC and *Auto Express* magazine, found that more than half of all drivers had been sworn at, more than two-thirds had been the target of abusive head signals, 600,000 motorists had been punched and attacked, and more than a million drivers had been rammed by another car.

RAC campaigns manager Richard Woods said: "This survey confirms motorists' concerns about increased aggression and stress on our roads. We can all help by choosing courtesy instead of confrontation when driving."

DISEASE

Evidence grows for cancer virus

British scientists have found more evidence that a virus could cause certain types of cancer, it is reported today. A Cambridge University team said cases of acute lymphocytic leukaemia (ALL), the biggest cause of leukaemia in children, clustered during the summer months in their study of 4,200 people.

"Whatever is causing this cancer is also seasonal," said Padmanabhan Badrinath, who worked on the study. "We think the potential candidate is a viral infection."

The study, published in the *British Journal of Cancer*, found that ALL was 40 per cent more likely to be diagnosed between May and October than in other months.

ALL affects one in 100,000 children. Victims are lethargic and feverish, pale, irritable and have joint and bone pain. They are anaemic and their immune systems are damaged.

A few cases seem to have genetic factors and there was a six-fold increase in leukaemia, mostly ALL, in Japanese children exposed to radiation from atomic bombs in the Second World War.

Several studies have shown a small increase in ALL among children living near power plants or nuclear reprocessing plants.

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In the Eighties designer labels were for the rich, as Yuppies showed how much they were worth. But this decade's designer clothes are for the masses



Style by design: Liam Gallagher and his wife Patsy Kensit shopping at the weekend in Smeane Street, where London's top couture stores are concentrated. Photograph Emma Boam

High fashion sweeps high street

Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

As you walk down Bond Street in your Armani T-shirt, Versace jeans, DKNY sunglasses and swinging your Prada handbag, breathe a sigh of relief. It is time to love your labels again as London becomes the world's most popular place for designer stores.

Traditional fashion capitals like Paris and Milan have found themselves left behind as big names cash in on the feel-good factor, according to a new survey.

Fuelled by the success of London Fashion Week and London's christening as the capital of cool, there have been 35 designer store openings in London since 1990 and the capital now has more designer floorspace in the pipeline for 1997-98 than Paris, Milan or Los Angeles.

And London is not the only place to benefit – both Armani and Hermes will open stores on King Street, Manchester, this year, which has become known as "the Bond Street of the North". They join Hugo Boss and DKNY there. Paul Smith



Fashion item: A browser at Asprey steps out on to Bond Street, London – the 'capital of cool'. Photograph: Andrew Buurman

and Vivienne Westwood have also moved into Manchester, Red or Dead into Sheffield and Gianni Versace and Christian Lacroix into Glasgow.

More than half the openings in London and New York by the top nine names – like Armani, Versace, Tommy Hilfinger, Donna Karan and Gucci – have happened since 1995, according to the investment research company Hillier Parker. In London this has crystallised into three

can be attributed to several factors. The UK and the US emerged early from economic recessions compared to countries like France and Germany, while the rich, who buy designer clothes, have been getting richer. In both the UK and the US, people in the top 20 per cent income group have enjoyed large growth in their net disposable incomes – up to 60 per cent between 1979 and 1994 – which has filtered through to increased spending on clothes and footwear.

But while the 1980s created designer labels almost exclusively for the rich, this decade's designer clothes are for the masses. Only 6 per cent of the population could afford ready-to-wear, but more than 60 per cent can afford the so-called diffusion lines. So far, 35 per cent of the stores are diffusion line outlets, and for those in the pipeline the percentage is growing.

There are few people who can afford £700 a garment, let's face it. But take something like CK Jeans," said Alexander Lawrie, retail analyst and author of the report. "At £45 they may be cheaper than a pair of Levi's

and they have become a best seller. Kids like them because they are different – they are bored of wearing Levis and Wrangler and the kids also perceive that they are getting catwalk quality. It's a triumph of image over substance."

"It's buying into the catwalk lifestyle. And designers are becoming famous in the way football stars did. It's not just about their collections. There's a big obsession with the private life of say Calvin Klein, Armani, Ralph Lauren was profiled in *Fortune* magazine. It's become this whole big thing."

As the designers move in, the competition gets fiercer and fiercer. Ralph Lauren who is to open a new store in Bond Street

in 1998 is paying an annual lease of £2.5m – a new London record – whilst spending £10m on refurbishing the site. Prada, due to open this year on Old Bond Street, is believed to have paid £650,000 to Jil Sander to obtain the lease of this premium site. Moschino and Saks Fifth Avenue are looking for sites in the area. Rents in Old Bond Street are rising by more than a third every year. To finance such expansion three of the top nine designers have floated on the stock market and others look likely to relinquish their privately owned status.

"The major provincial cities are getting more designer stores," added Clive Vaughan of the leading retail analysts Ver-

dier. "They are seeking further opportunities. There is a sea change away from retailer labels which is why the department store sector is growing so well. They are on the crest of the wave."

"We haven't reached the limits yet," said Peter York, style guru. "It is a simple way of telegraphing where you are and what you want which is pretty extensive... If people feel more happy, more assured because they are prepared to pay £20 to have a name on their jeans it's a fair price – no a relatively modest price – for therapy."

■ Fashion Designer Store Expansion in Central London and New York: available from Hillier Parker, 0171 629 7666

Song contest win will cost BBC dear

Ian Burrell

As Katrina and the Waves performed their celebratory rendition of Eurovision winner "Love Shine A Light" in Dublin on Saturday night, BBC executives were reeling from the £3m hole which the song's success could blow in their budget.

For in Eurovision tradition, the winning country is obliged to stage the following year's contest.

After Bucks Fizz's victory with "Making Your Mind Up" 16 years ago, Jan Leeming presided over the last British-staged Eurovision, a comparatively tame affair in the genteel surroundings of Harrogate.

Since then the stakes have been raised, with new technology and competition from other entertainment sources transforming the event into an extravagant occasion.

Ireland's domination of the contest – with four victories in the past six years – has nearly bankrupted the national television station RTE.

But BBC bosses, like the Eurovision contestants, kept smiling yesterday, with Michael Legge, the head of BBC entertainment, saying "I can't think of a nicer problem to have."

Apparently confusing the significance of the occasion with Thursday's election, he added: "We are delighted to be bringing the contest back after an absence of 18 years [sic]."

Manchester has already thrown its hat into the ring as a potential venue, but the British public is likely to be less than overwhelmed by the prospect of staging the contest.

Eurovision expert Professor Ian Gordon of Reading University, said: "The British seem to feel contempt for the type of song which tends to win. There is a very strong Euro-sceptic element to British pop tastes."

Invited for the first time to take part in a televote on this year's event, British viewers backed the Irish contestant, but Norway was in mourning again after scoring "nil points" for a record fourth time and coming last for an unrivalled sixth year.

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West's diseases spread as the world goes grey

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

The greying of the world is revealed in a report today, which shows that global life expectancy has risen faster in the last half century than in the previous 2,000 years.

Growing prosperity and improving living conditions are contributing to an extraordinary extension of longevity. Life expectancy at birth across the world has risen from 48 in 1955 to 65 today, according to the World Health Organisation. Over the next two decades, the global population of over-65s is set to rise by 82 per cent.

However, as the Western way of life is exported round the world, the Western way of death is following closely in its wake. In its 1997 report, the WHO warns that the ageing population is experiencing a rapid rise in cancer, heart disease and other chronic conditions, which threatens to reduce the benefit of those extra years of life.

The number of over-65s is expected to grow from 380 million today to 690 million by 2020. Over the same period, cancers will rise from 10 million to 15 million cases annually, cases of diabetes will more than double and dementia will become a leading cause of disability.

Launching the report at a press conference in London, Dr Paul Kleihues, director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyon, France, said the increase in chronic diseases in old age was a testament to the success of efforts to combat infectious diseases, which predominantly kill the young. "The increase in life expectancy is one of our great-



Long live youth: Affluent women like Goldie Hawn, Jane Fonda and Lauren Bacall are living healthier lifestyles. The aim is to "die young as late as possible", according to the WHO

est achievements, but longevity without health is an empty prize. Health expectancy is more important than life expectancy. The aim should be to die young as late as possible."

With increasing age, chronic conditions have more time to develop to a deadly or disabling stage, and the globalisation of unhealthy lifestyles, linked to diet, lack of exercise, and smoking, bring on Western patterns of disease. Dr Kleihues said: "We know that the cancers in an area reflect the local lifestyle and with a change of lifestyle there is a change in the disease pattern. We are, nevertheless, surprised at the speed of change."

Large parts of the newly in-

dustrialised world now face a double burden – with the chronic conditions linked to growing affluence rising faster than the older ones, linked to poverty and infection, fall.

So-called "diseases of affluence" kill more people in the developing world but cause a higher proportion of deaths in the developed world. Heart disease, the chief affliction of the West, now accounts for more than a quarter of deaths in the developing world. In Central America and the Middle East, heart disease, diabetes and renal disease dominate the medical wards.

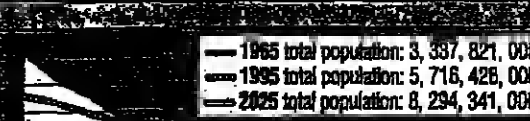
Lung cancer rates in European women, who took up smoking later than men, are set

to rise by a third by 2005. Dr Kleihues said the priority should be to prevent young people taking up the habit. "All attempts to legislate to restrict smoking by young people in Europe have been blocked by three countries – Germany, the Netherlands and the UK. We hope very much with a new UK government this will change."

Dr Hilary King, WHO medical officer in the division of non-communicable diseases, said the rapid increase of chronic diseases in developing countries could be due to genetic factors. "Non-Caucasians may have a greater underlying susceptibility to these diseases. Individuals who live in harsher parts of the world, where food supplies are erratic, develop the capacity to store energy so that they can survive. But when a Western diet is available that same capacity can become a disadvantage, precipitating diabetes and heart disease."

■ A study in the *Lancet* says more people died world-wide from suicide than from HIV infection in 1990, and more than half the female suicides in the world occurred in China.

How ageing will change the world



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Blair's
hymn to
Galaxy
man

Blair's hymn to Galaxy man

Clare Garner

When Tony Blair spurned the prime ministerial Daimler in favour of a black Ford Galaxy to ferry his family to church yesterday, he may inadvertently have prompted a dash for copycat cars.

Seized on as the ideal vehicle for many families, the Ford Galaxy is the motor industry's latest success. With the endorsement of Britain's First Family, Ford is relishing the prospect of extra sales for the seven-seater people mover. During the campaign, Mr Blair had used the phrase "Galaxy man" in describing the kind of families to whom Labour was appealing - claiming that the party had already succeeded in wooing Sierra and Mondeo man.

Less than 48 hours after becoming Prime Minister, Mr Blair, dressed in a tieless blue shirt and chinos, set out for St Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church, his local church in north London, for the 10am family mass. It is a service he has attended whenever possible over the past few years.

The modern church, located a few hundred yards from Arsenal football ground at Highbury - near the Blair's former home - was filled with a congregation keen to congratulate Mr Blair. There was loud applause towards the end of mass, when Monsignor Thomas Egan, the vicar-general attached to the parish, told the 500-odd congregation: "I am sure we cannot let this occasion go without, on behalf of the parish, congratulating Tony on being elected Prime Minister."

A member of the congregation, Elizabeth Pearce, read bidding prayers for leaders and those holding authority. She asked the congregation to remember "those who have power and are in a position of authority... that they may work to secure justice for all their brothers and sisters".

Mr Blair, a practising Anglican, stayed in his pew while his wife, Cherie, and their three children, all four of whom are Catholic - took Communion.



People mover: Tony Blair, his wife, Cherie, with sons Nicky and Euan leave their Islington home to drive to church

Harman pledges an end to wasted lives on the dole

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The hardline attitude to be taken by the new Labour government on social security fraud and "benefits for life" was spelled out yesterday by Harriet Harman.

The Secretary of State for Social Security told GMTV's *Sunday Programme*: "When the welfare state was set up, it was for people who, for one reason or another, couldn't work. It wasn't for people who just didn't want to work."

She said that young people were to be offered a range of options: quality training or worthwhile jobs. "But there won't be the option of simply life on benefits. But that's not what young people want... I don't think people will support a welfare state which is simply about an alternative way of life."

The fact that Frank Field, former chairman of the all-party Commons Social Security Select Committee, has been appointed number two at the department has already sent out a signal that Labour means it when it says that radical reform of the welfare

state is now being sought. Ms Harman said yesterday: "The best form of welfare for people of working age is work. We can't go on with the situation where one in five households of people of working age has no one in work, so the entire household is dependent upon benefits."

There won't be the option of life on benefits

"That gives them a low standard of living and it means the taxpayer has to pick up the bill, so then everybody else is told, education is told, 'Sorry, there's not enough money', hospitals, there's not enough money, because too much of the public purse is being eaten up by people who don't want to be, but are, dependent on benefits, and we have to turn that round." This year's social security budget is set at £99.5bn, with an expected rise

to £102.75bn next year. Ms Harman added: "We're not going to lecture them or thump them. We're going to ensure that offers are made... and they are required to take those."

There was no option of rejecting a worthwhile offer of a job or training.

As for pensions, Ms Harman repeated the Labour commitment to create a "stakeholders' pension" scheme, run by the private sector, but organised and monitored by government.

Later, on London Weekend Television's *CrossTalk*, she said that as minister with special Cabinet responsibility for women, she would be giving high priority to helping single mothers.

"Lone mothers often face huge problems moving off benefit and into work," she said. "But it is a step the vast majority of them want to make."

"So I shall be starting with the biggest barrier they have to cross, namely access to childcare. I shall start talking to the key groups involved in this area within the next few days."

Euro-sceptic wing clipped

Kathy Marks

More than half of leading Euro-sceptic Tory MPs in the last parliament lost their seats in the general election, suggesting that the British public does not share their aversion to further European integration.

Of the 120 sitting Tories identified by Tory newspapers as Euro-sceptic, 62 were unseated - 55 by Labour, six by the Liberal Democrats and one by the Scottish National Party. Many of the surviving 58 held on with greatly reduced majorities.

The most prominent Tory casualties from the right of the party

were the former Secretary of State for Defence, Michael Portillo, who would almost certainly have been a heavyweight right-wing contender for the leadership, and Michael Forsyth, the former Secretary of State for Scotland.

Dame Angela Rumbold, the Conservative party vice-chairman, who published a campaign leaflet denouncing the single currency, was also ousted by Labour.

The losers may, to a large extent, have been victims of the general anti-Tory tide that swept the country on Thursday. But the fact that their anti-European credentials failed to save them in-

dicates that electors were either not interested in the issue, or are more committed than the politicians to Europe.

Dozens of soulmates of the departed MPs survived to fight the Brussels dragon another day. Among the rump of Euro-sceptics in the new parliament will be several former Cabinet ministers: Peter Lilley, already a candidate for the Tory leadership, and Michael Howard and William Hague, both likely contenders.

Other Tories from that wing of the party who held on to their seats were Angela Browning, Eric Forth, John MacGregor, Michael Ancram - and John Redwood.

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blair's britain

Mother and son vow to live up to rebel MP's principles

Kim Sengupta

It is a mother and child reunion which writes a new chapter in the history of the Labour Party. Ann and John Cryer are the first mother and son to have won seats together party in Parliament. Their presence is a potent symbol of the Labour election landslide and also a poignant reminder of the tragic early death of one of the great rebel MPs of the past.

Bob Cryer died at the wheel of his car when it crashed through a barrier on the M1 in April 1994. His wife, who was in the passenger seat, suffered facial injuries. They had been on their way to the Commons for a birthday party for their son.

Mr Cryer had been a thorn in the side of Labour establishment, and had resigned his government seat on a point of principle. He had also been one of the most trenchant and com-

bative critics of the Tories. But there was real grief at the death from all sides.

The loss shattered the family. John, a journalist, vowed that one day he would follow in his father's footsteps and carry on his work in Parliament. He had learnt his politics at his father's knee, and joined the Labour Party at 15.

Two weeks after Mr Cryer was killed his widow was approached by the local party to ask whether she would consider replacing him as the MP for Bradford South. But she was too desolate to contemplate a political career and said she was not ready. "I was in a state of shock at the time. I felt terrible grief. For the first six months I was seriously in depression and for the next six I was very, very down," she recalled.

"We had been married for 31 years, and we were very close. I still remember the accident, I

shall never forget it. At the time I started to talk to Bob and I knew straight away he was dead, it is something I still go through most days. We were going down for John's birthday. It is a shame for him his birthday has become associated with Bob's death.

A year later, there was another approach from the neighbouring constituency of Keighley, her husband's first seat, which he had lost to the Tories after boundary changes.

Mrs Cryer, 56, said: "I talked it through with John, and my daughter Jane, and decided to give it a go. I had first met Bob at a Labour Party conference in Blackpool in 1961, and we have always been a political family.

"Bob and I always thought he would never have lost Keighley in the first place if the very odd changes had not been brought in. They could not beat him fairly, so they changed the rules.

"There is an added satisfac-

tion to this win, I have won back Keighley from Gary Waller, who beat Bob in 1983. My politics are similar to Bob's. I shall try to make sure the Labour government do not abandon the basic beliefs of the Labour Party."

John Cryer, 33, wrested Hornchurch from Robin Squire, the Under Secretary for Education and Employment, overturning a 9,000 majority.

Mr Cryer said: "We fought very hard to win this, but at the end it was still a very pleasant surprise. I still cannot believe the sheer size of the party majority. My father was a boro rebel. He was made Under-Secretary for Industry, but he hated being in government ...

"He has been described as a man of principle who always fought for the underdog. He defended the rights of working people, the underprivileged and minorities. I shall do my best to carry on that task."



Keeping it in the family: Ann and John Cryer, who are among Labour's new intake of MPs Photograph: Justin Slee/Guzelian

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PR heads left's list of urgent reforms

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Labour's left, both traditional and modern, will begin this week to draw up an agenda for reform on which it will lobby Tony Blair's government.

The new Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, will join other Labour MPs at a conference this weekend to discuss how the "new left" will respond to the party's landslide victory.

The conference, organised by the Fabians and the Democratic Left with the Institute for Public Policy research, is likely to reject what many see as the old left's unrealistic demands. Instead, it will call for a firm timetable on electoral and constitutional reform from the Labour government.

Some "old" left-wingers were making their views known yesterday for the first time since the election was called.

Ken Livingstone, MP for Brent East, said in a television interview that the Chancellor Gordon Brown should impose substantial tax increases on high earners in spite of a pledge not to raise income tax.

"I don't believe for a minute that a Labour government is going to start hitting people earning under £50,000 a year, and the vast majority of the public agree with that," he said.

Meanwhile, those on what he called the "new left" were tailoring their demands to what they thought could be achieved. They intend to win a firm commitment on proportional representation, first for European elections and then, through a referendum, for Westminster elections.

Last night Cabinet sources were suggesting the issue of PR would not be tackled until the referendums on devolution for Scotland and Wales had been held.

However, the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform says it has already signed up 100 MPs and will fight vigorously for firm commitments. Mr Blair has said he is "not persuaded" of the case for electoral reform and John Prescott has expressed similar views. But Clare Short, Robin Cook and Mo Mowlam have said they favour it.

Labour has promised a referendum on the issue but has not said when it will take place. A possible interim measure would be to adopt the "list" system for Euro-elections, as the rest of Europe has done. This would involve the election of constituency MPs with an extra list who were not attached to an area but who helped to balance the numbers from each party.

Electoral reform campaigners seek a firm promise that a commission on the issue will sit later this year and want a halt called to boundary commissions for European constituencies. They say boundary changes would not be necessary if the voting system was changed.

Stephen Twigg, general secretary of the Fabians and the new MP for Enfield Southgate, Michael Portillo's former constituency, said he strongly supported the campaign. "The commitment to PR is part of being new Labour. It is part of the new politics Tony Blair is talking about. We need an end to tribalism and if that is what we stand for then PR should be part of it," he said.

Letters, page 14

Schools guru to enforce pledges

Lucy Ward
Education Correspondent

The school improvement guru who headed Labour's literacy task force was yesterday appointed special adviser to the Government on standards and effectiveness in schools.

Michael Barber, the London University academic who has advised the Labour leadership on education for two years, as well as heading research projects for the Conservative government, will oversee implementation of Labour's manifesto pledges aimed at raising educational standards.

Among his responsibilities will be programmes on school target-setting, failing schools, home school contracts and homework requirements.

Professor Barber, 41, former Dean of New Initiatives at London University's Institute of Education, is a New Labour favourite and "ideas man". Last year he suggested the post of Education and Employment Secretary should be elevated to

a similar rank to the Foreign Secretary. His proposals for an education revolution based on guaranteeing standards and encouraging lifetime learning, set out last year in his book *The Learning Game*, were praised as "provocative and timely" by Tony Blair.

Professor Barber will begin preparatory work tomorrow on elements of the Government's Education White Paper, expected to be out by June. The paper would include policies requiring legislation, such as plans to abolish grant maintained status, but would also "set out the Government's broader aims and ambitions on education," he said.

As part of Labour's School Improvement Strategy, local Education Authorities will be required to submit education development plans to the Department for Education and Employment. "There has never been a Labour government with such a mandate or with such a clear programme on education," he said.

Leaders:
Blair on
world s

Anna Maria



Heads of state: Blair and Clinton in 1997

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Beckett clocks on to promise workers the European ideal



Getting away from it all: Helmut Kohl enjoying a day off on his current visit to Australia. Under an EU directive workers are guaranteed four weeks off Photograph: AP

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Early action to implement the 48-hour-week Working Time Directive will be announced shortly by Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade.

The initiative was underlined last night by a statement from Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, that the new Government will sign up to the Social Chapter at the Amsterdam heads of government summit next month.

Mr Cook said: "We do not accept that the British people should be second class citizens with less rights than employees on the Continent."

"We want our people to enjoy the right to information about their company and parental leave to be with their family, as good as those who work on the Continent, often for the same companies."

The Foreign Secretary said that a meeting of government representatives in Strasbourg today would open a new chapter in Britain's relations with Europe. "It marks a fresh start in Europe for Britain, working with other member states as a partner, not as an opponent."

As it stands, the separate Working Time Directive offers employees an opportunity to refuse to work more than 48

hours a week, and a guaranteed four-week holiday each year. The Tories have said that it could cost business £2bn a year.

A British appeal against the European directive - enacted under health and safety provisions to sidestep a British veto - was rejected by the European Court in November. John Major had already announced that he would have tried to force a withdrawal of the directive's application at Amsterdam.

He was threatening to block all further movement on a new European treaty, unless he won that fight.

But Ian Lang, the Conservative President of the Board of Trade, who lost his Commons seat on Thursday, has already completed a consultation process on the detailed implementation of the directive.

It is now ready for the green light to be given by Mrs Beckett and an early statement of intent can be expected in the Queen's Speech for the next parliamentary year, on 14 May.

Other early initiatives may well emerge after today's meeting in Strasbourg, when the Government will indicate the softer, less confrontational line that can be expected in day-to-day negotiations.

Early meetings between Tony Blair and Helmut Kohl, the

German Chancellor, and Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, and current holder of the EU presidency, are also expected before the end of the month.

Peter Mandelson, the new

policy co-ordinator in the Cabinet Office, said on Sky television yesterday: "Europe needs reforming, it needs new priorities, it needs to become a people's Europe. It has got to get

much more in step with its own citizens, more open, more outward-looking, more democratic."

"We want to complete the Single Market, that's the first

priority, and secondly we have got to reform the Common Agricultural Policy, huge waste and fraud going on there."

"We have got to look to the enlargement of the European

Union, to extend the mantle of democracy to the newly liberated countries in central and eastern Europe."

But Mr Mandelson added: "I don't think there is an appetite

either here or in the rest of the European Union for great integrationist steps forward. What people want is sensible, practical cooperation between countries."

Leaders call Blair on to world stage

Andrew Marshall

Tony Blair has been asked by the Syrian President to intervene in support of peace in the Middle East, one of a series of requests that Britain's new leader use his diplomatic weight around the world.

President Hafez al-Assad said in a cable to the Prime Minister that British support for the Middle East peace process was vital. "I hope that the government of the United Kingdom under your leadership, and within the European Union, will continue to support the cause of just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant United Nations



Hafez al-Assad: Cable asked for Prime Minister's support

resolutions and the principle of land for peace," he said.

The official Syrian newspaper, *Tishreen*, said it believed Mr Blair would give Europe a greater role in the Middle East. "The region and the world look for a more effective European role. Britain can contribute to the shaping of this role as Blair himself declared," *Tishreen* said. "Positions of the Conservatives

were in fact disappointing. They were biased to Israel."

A second area where foreign governments will look to Britain for action is over the disputed province of Kashmir. India rules two-thirds and Pakistan the rest, and the two countries have fought two of their three wars over it. A Labour national executive committee resolution in 1995 said the party would help negotiate a peace settlement.

Pakistan wants outside help to resolve the dispute and Nawaz Sharif, the Pakistani Prime Minister, on Saturday extended a "most cordial invitation" to Mr Blair to pay an early visit. India maintains the issue can be discussed only bilaterally with Pakistan, saying on Friday it expected its relations with Britain to improve, but officials privately expressed fears over Kashmir.

Cyprus has also expressed hopes that Mr Blair will help to break the deadlock over the divided island. "We are confident that the Labour Party's declared positions on Cyprus will be effectively promoted," said President Glafos Clerides. Britain, Greece and Turkey are guarantor powers of Cyprus's sovereignty under international treaties. Britain's former Tory government appointed Sir David Hannay, its former ambassador to the United Nations, as its special representative on the Cyprus issue last year.

Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, also invited Mr Blair to make an early visit. The Russian leader said the Kremlin sees co-operation and partnership with Britain as a foreign policy priority and an important element in European and world security, according to the Interfax news agency. It is likely that Moscow will look for a more emollient policy in London over Nato enlargement into eastern Europe, which was backed by the Conservatives.

There is also hope in Argentina that Labour's arrival will lead to a shift of strategy over the Falkland Islands. "One always maintains the hope that a change of government... in that country could be positive - in some way for our sovereignty claim," said President Carlos Menem in comments published on Friday. Labour has said there will be no change in policy.

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Russians pack up their roubles for a package of fun

We were looking for a change, a burst of technicolour after the monotonous hues of Moscow. And southern Turkey seemed right. The brochures said the sun shines and the air is clear and warm. A pollen-scented breeze drifts down from the Taurus mountains and through the banana groves along the edge of an azure Mediterranean. Amazingly, all this guff turned out to be true.

We were in Antalya, on the southern coast. Like the cocktails on sale in the outdoor bars along Atatürk Street, the main boulevard, it is a potent cultural

mixture – an Islamic community (prayers ring out from the mosques as the sun sets) cross-bred with a wild eastern town, and yet unapologetically Western, with fish 'n' chips 'n' beer.

Its identity crisis was on view on the news stands: copies of postcards showing thonged female backsides sat next to German-language copies of the Koran. This is where the men and women who run Western Europe's giant industrial engine come to relax. And so, in increasing numbers, do Russians.

Being a snob at heart, I will admit to some apprehension

when my wife signed us up for a week-long Russian package, albeit for a remarkably low price. I saw dingy rooms; nights interrupted by vodka-crazed singing; food poisoning; compulsory tours of shopping centres. My prejudices hardened just after we had arrived. No sooner had our flycatcher-86 taxied heavily to a halt than one of our party, a young woman, started vomiting. She was so drunk that she could barely walk off the aircraft.

The outlook darkened further once we had found our rep, standing amid a crowd of out-

lets, flourishing their signs. "This is a completely capitalist society," she explained in Russian, as we drove down the coast in a minibus, awkwardly clutching bunches of carnations, a gift from our hosts. "You have to pay for everything. They'll be charging for the air next." A Georgian, brought up in Soviet-controlled Tbilisi, she had been shocked to discover that nowhere in this cultural capitalist desert could she buy a tape of Mozart's *Requiem*.

But snobs should not prosper, and now I know that I was wrong. Our fellow holidaymakers were calm and quiet. These were not the so-called "novi Russkii" – new Russians with so many ill-gotten wads of money that prices have lost all meaning. Our co-travellers were members of Russia's small middle class – travel agents, middle-ranking businessmen, white-collar workers – people who knew what value meant, and who were

determined to get it. Yes, they quite liked the hotel's vast pool, its terraces overlooking a private beach, its tennis court and casino. But they weren't afraid of speaking out if something wasn't up to scratch.

Sasha, a 25-year-old manager from one of Moscow's handful of McDonald's outlets, was with his wife, also a McDonald's employee. On our first day, he appeared with a hand-written list detailing his complaints and queries, which he presented to the rep. Though large, his room had no sea view; there were, he said, only three hot courses at

the evening buffet, whereas the last time he visited Turkey his hotel had many more. And so on. "My wife and I have decided to spend our money now," he explained. "We could stay at home and do nothing except save. But who in Russia knows what tomorrow holds?"

I usually don't much like quibblers, the kind of people who insist on dividing restaurant bills precisely. But Sasha made his case pleasantly. He is not rich, it was evidently not easy to afford a holiday, and he knew he would soon be returning to a penny-wise existence in Moscow.

Historically, Russia has always had trouble building a middle class. They are the foundation stone for the establishment of a sound market economy, law and order, and liberalism in a way in which the super-rich, the criminal classes, and the overwhelming multitude of impoverished Russians can never be.

By politically demanding value for his rouble, Sasha and his ilk are what Russia needs right now – even if the Turks think they're fustians.

Phil Reeves

MOSCOW DAYS

Drugs top Clinton talks in Mexico

Phil Davison
Latin America Correspondent
Mary Dejevsky
Washington

Bill Clinton has been around the globe as President but he has never crossed his southern border. Today he puts that right with an official visit to Mexico, dubbed the United States "distant neighbour". It will be his first official visit to a Latin American country.

The flow of narcotics from Mexico to the US, as well as the flow of Mexicans themselves, will top the agenda in talks with President Ernesto Zedillo. But the three-day visit will be largely symbolic, the start of a long-delayed effort by Mr Clinton to tighten trade and other ties with the nations to the south.

Critics say he is somewhat late. Since he led a so-called

Washington — The most likely explanation for the crash of TWA flight 800 off Long Island last summer is still "catastrophic mechanical failure", according to the head of the FBI, Louis Freeh, writes Mary Dejevsky.

In a television interview yesterday he denied that the FBI had been party to a "giant cover-up" and dismissed suggestions that the jet might have been brought down by a missile.

Mr Freeh was nonetheless careful not to rule out any possibility too categorically. He said he hoped the official inquiry would present its findings by late summer, more than a year after the crash which killed 230 people.

Summit of the Americas in Miami in December 1994, pledging a pan-American free trade zone within a decade, he has largely neglected Latin American nations and seen Europe muscle in.

The European Union did more trade with the South American common market – known as Mercosur – than did the US last year for the first time.

"They [the Americans] only turn to look at our countries when there are wars, conflicts or natural disasters," Nicaraguan President Arnoldo Alemán said recently.

Mr Clinton will be welcomed politely, but not particularly warmly in Mexico, where people still dream of going north to prosperity but where stories of the two countries' 19th century war are still handed down from generation to generation.

"I don't see it as a visit of rec-

onciliation," Mr Clinton told reporters in Washington. "I see it as building an ongoing partnership between two great nations that share a huge border and a common future, have some common problems, and inevitably some disagreements."

The major common problem is their 2,000-mile border, seen by poor Mexicans as a stepping stone to prosperity, from the Third World to the First. In August new US laws come into force that will, if not amended, mean that new arrivals who do not qualify for citizenship or do not want US citizenship will not be entitled to federal welfare benefits. These provisions are accompanied by a tougher approach to illegal immigration.

The legislation is not popular with some US states, which fear they could end up funding welfare programmes for legal immigrants. It worries the Mexican authorities, however, who fear that emigration – which provides an important safety valve for internal discontent and a reliable source of US dollars – could become even harder than at present.

Mr Zedillo will tell Mr Clinton the key is in helping narrow the economic gap, otherwise Mexicans will always head north.

Mr Clinton is expected to congratulate Mr Zedillo on his efforts to curb the flow of marijuana, cocaine and heroin across the border although the Mexican President's critics say many government officials at federal, state and local level are still in the pay of drug lords.

Last week Mexico announced it was scrapping its antiquated anti-narcotics agency and giving its duties to the attorney-general's office. The head of the agency, an army general, was arrested in February for protecting the country's leading drug baron.

Mr Clinton and Mr Zedillo are expected to sign a vaguely worded agreement on the security of US drug enforcement agents. The latter seek the formal right to carry weapons on Mexican soil for their own protection against violent drug trafficking gangs. Mexico has long opposed the idea, citing its sovereignty, but in effect most US agents carry weapons anyway.

In case it all seems one-way, Mexico will protest to the US over the influx of weapons. Mexican drug gangs get most of their guns from the US because of lax gun laws and poor border checks.

Kasparov puts clear blue water between man and machine



William Hartston
It is 6ft 5ins tall, weighs 1.4 tons and calculates 200 million chess moves every second, but Deeper Blue, the IBM computer still appears, on the evidence of Saturday's opening game of their match in New York, to be no match for Garry Kasparov.

Last year its predecessor, Deep Blue, created a sensation by winning

one game against Kasparov. It was the first time a world chess champion had been beaten by a machine at normal rates of play. Nevertheless, Kasparov won the match by a final score of 4-2.

Since then, the technicians at IBM have been putting in considerable efforts to strengthen the play of their machine. Hardware

improvements have doubled its processing speed.

Saturday's game, however, showed that computers still have a good deal to learn. Kasparov, playing white and pictured above on television monitors before a large audience, began cautiously, refusing to make the same mistake as in the opening game last year when he was

punished for taking too many risks. This time, it was the machine that was tempted into over-aggression. At the 13th move it advanced a pawn to force Kasparov's knight to retreat but weakened its own position in the process.

Beating off the threat, Kasparov gradually took control of the game and forced the machine to resign

at move 45. By creating wild complications from a dull looking position Deeper Blue showed it will be a very dangerous opponent in the five remaining games, but its poor judgement on occasions has made Kasparov a clear favourite to pocket the \$700,000 (£325,000) winner's purse.

Photograph: AP

Liberal champion launches HK party

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's well-known liberal legislator, Christine Loh, yesterday presided over the formation of a new party, the Citizens' Party.

Miss Loh spoke of the party "competing on better policies". "Basically, we're going to bang on quality," she said. And, in the best traditions of marketing managers everywhere, she insisted that "the market is not saturated for politics in Hong Kong".

Legal political parties are a relatively new phenomenon in Hong Kong. Less than a dozen have been formed in the past half decade, few quite as modestly as the Citizens' Party, with just 14 members and one legislator, Miss Loh, who will be kicked out of office along with her colleagues when China takes over on 1 July.

Christine Loh is among the more outstanding of Hong Kong's new politicians. As matters stand, they have no prospect of gaining political

power because the government will remain under the firm control of the executive. Moreover, those in the liberal camp may well face considerable problems from the incoming regime which is deeply suspicious of opposition politics and appears not

to understand the concept of an opposition.

However, Miss Loh remains an optimist. She believes that there is everything to play for in the battle of ideas.

As a legislator, she has established a reputation as a battler for

human rights and environmental causes. A lawyer by training, headed for a highly-lucrative career in the private sector, Miss Loh has opted instead for what may become the political wilderness of opposition, facing local media hostility and little

prospect of influencing the government.

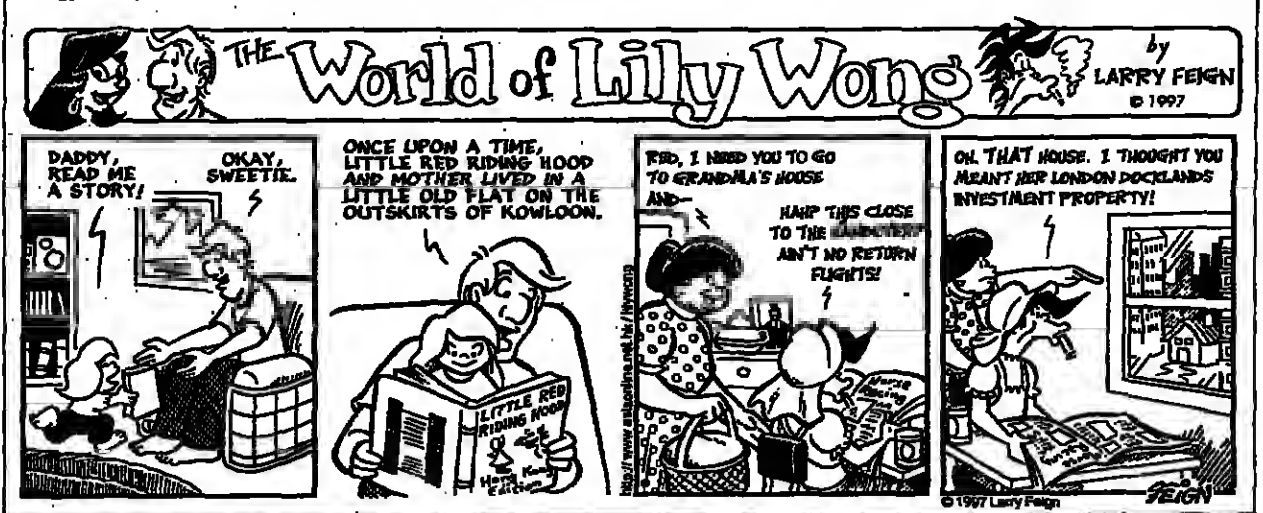
The parties which matter these days are those which support Peking, or are quickly edging in that direction. Their problem is a consistent failure to gain popular support. China's

rival legislature is now working out plans to change the electoral system. Critics, including Chris Patten, the Governor, say the aim is to rig the polls to help these parties win.

The pro-Peking parties are busy reassessing their role now they are poised to become the closest thing Hoeg Kong has to government parties. Two of the less successful ones are planning a merger, while the largest of the pro-Peking parties is rewriting its platform. It is wrestling with the problem of reconciling its support for trade unions with the views of a government dominated by business leaders.

The democratic camp appears to be further divided by the creation of the Citizens' Party, but Martin Lee, leader of the Democratic Party, Hong Kong's largest, is sanguine.

Appearing at yesterday's launch celebrations for the Citizens' Party, he said: "The democratic camp has always been larger than the Democratic Party." He added: "I see a lot of common ground and we certainly will co-operate."



Due to production problems this cartoon appeared in some editions of last Friday's paper



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Zaire's revolution nears climax as

Rebels push towards capital
as élite units fade away

Ed O'Loughlin
Kinshasa

As Zairean peace talks inched forward yesterday, rebel soldiers east of the capital were pushing ahead to ensure there could be only one outcome to the seven-month-old civil war.

Reports from diplomatic and military sources in Kinshasa said that last Friday soldiers of Laurent Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces passed through the town of Kenge, 150 miles to the east of the capital, and were advancing rapidly in a column of trucks. Yesterday Mr Kabila claimed that his troops would be within 60 miles of Kinshasa when night fell.

There are believed to be few, if any, organised government forces between the rebels and the capital. A series of bridges, reported to have been blown up

his supporters in the Zairean establishment a chance to deny absolute power to Mr Kabila.

Sources connected to the Zairean government said the president would offer to leave Zaire for "health reasons", handing power over – in the constitutionally prescribed manner – to the speaker of the parliamentary assembly.

At present the position is empty, but favourite for the job is Monsignor Laurent Monsengwo, a well-respected Roman Catholic archbishop who helped launch Zaire's ill-starred democratisation process in 1991. The new speaker would be charged with appointing an interim president, probably a currently serving minister who would co-operate with the rebels in organising elections.

Only the first part of this offer was likely to have much appeal for the increasingly hard-line Mr Kabila who, until a ceasefire is in place, has the opportunity to seize power. The rebel advance has accelerated in recent days, and reports from the city of Kikwit, captured early last week, say the airport is being used for an intensive airlift of supplies.

One source close to Zaire's military leadership says that a force of 1,500 élite presidential guards was ordered towards Kenge on Friday to launch a final counter-attack. Paid a special bonus in advance, many soldiers failed to turn up. Only around 300 are believed to have departed: their fate is unknown.

The remaining presidential guards and Zairean soldiers in Kinshasa seem to be making no effort to prepare defence for the capital, nor for its vital airport. If there is a battle for Kinshasa, it seems likely to be short.

In Kinshasa itself the streets were unusually quiet yesterday. Tensions have been raised not only by the political situation but by a closely linked monetary crisis. Last Thursday the bankrupt government of prime minister General Lukulu Bolongo announced that it was going to make a second attempt

to issue 100,000-Zaire notes – worth about 30 pence – in order to pay public servants and soldiers.

A similar attempt several months ago failed when people in Kinshasa refused to accept the new notes as tender – they were nicknamed "prostheses", in reference to Mr Mobutu's recent surgery for prostate cancer. The previous attempts to conjure new money into existence in 1993 sparked massive looting when government troops realised they had been paid in worthless currency.

This, coupled with the looming prospect of a power vacuum if Mr Mobutu resigns, is causing fears that a further bout of rioting and looting could be imminent. Last Friday banks failed to reopen after the 1 May public holiday. It is not clear whether they will be open today.



Going home: Mutu refugees preparing to board a UN transport aircraft at Kisangani, Zaire, which is headed for Rwanda Photograph: John Moore/AP

Little doubt remained that peace talks would bring an end to Mobutu's rule

by the retreating government army last week are now said to be intact. Diplomatic sources say the rebels could launch an assault on Kinshasa within days should Mr Kabila fail to get what he wants from the ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Little doubt remained that the peace negotiations would bring an end to 31 years of Mobutist rule – whether or not a deal was signed. Reports from the United States say that the 66-year-old dictator has signalled his intention to resign in a letter to President Bill Clinton. Diplomatic sources in Kinshasa said the Zairean president was merely biding out for a transition deal that would give

British troops on standby

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

British officials have contingency plans to evacuate up to 1,000 European and Commonwealth citizens from Kinshasa if the situation deteriorates. They stressed they had no reason to believe it would, but were taking no chances. "Kinshasa is currently calm but it could turn nasty within hours," said one.

Operation "Determinant" has continued with 200 more British troops from the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment, the spearhead battalion, who have now arrived on Ascension Island, en route to join another 100 British troops in Libreville, the capital of Gabon.

They can, if necessary, reinforce the 40 Royal Marines already in position on the banks of the Zaire river in case they have to organise an evacuation. Another 60 British personnel are in Brazzaville, Congo, as the forward headquarters for the operation which is commanded by Brigadier Julian Thomson of the Royal Marines. The other main nations involved in pulling foreign citizens out are France, the US and Belgium.

France has 350 troops in Brazzaville and 350 in Libreville, al-

though only the former are earmarked to help evacuate foreign nationals.

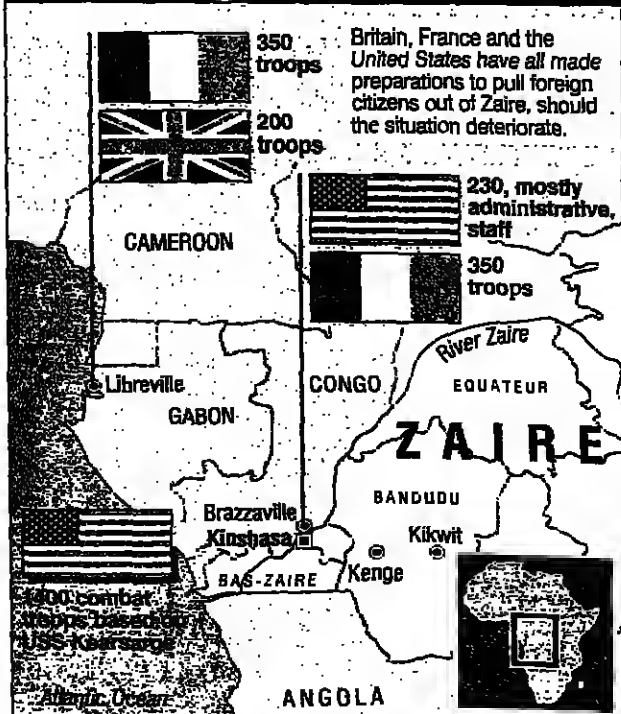
The US has 230 (mostly administrative staff) in Brazzaville; the combat troops, 1,400 of them, are embarked on the USS *Kearsarge* which took over from the USS *Nassau* on Tuesday. The Belgians have 150 troops in Libreville and another 400 at Pointe Noire, Congo.

The British Royal Marines can lift 100 people at a time in two hovercraft, known as LCAC(L)s (Landing Craft Air Cushion (Light)) and four "rigid raider" assault boats.

The plans, which have been developed with the British Ambassador in Kinshasa, involve collecting the people for whom the British have taken responsibility – up to 250 British, 250 Commonwealth and 500 other EU citizens – from various assembly points and transporting them north, across the Zaire river, and the border, to Brazzaville.

The main assembly point is the British Embassy enclosure on the banks of the Zaire river, where a jetty has been repaired to enable people to be embarked. A second assembly point is in the Gulf Oil compound, and there are others ten to twelve miles south of Kinshasa.

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new order sweeps its way to power

Legacy of corrupt and ruthless dictator who built Versailles in the jungle



Past and present: Mobutu rousing the masses in 1977, right, and rebel leader Laurent Kabila

Photographs: AP

Kinshasa (Reuters) — President Mobutu Sese Seko, one of Africa's longest-serving strongmen, now trying to negotiate a dignified exit from power, has ruled Zaire for more than three decades with a blend of military ruthlessness and political acumen.

A master of the power game, he exploited the West's strategic fears during the Cold War and gave his sprawling and chaotic country at the heart of Africa a badly-needed focus in the turbulent aftermath of independence from Belgium in 1960.

A reluctant convert to democracy, he started pushing, in public at least, for much-delayed multi-party presidential elections — confident that his support in rural areas would enable him to legitimise his rule through the ballot box.

"The democratic process must inevitably be crowned by free and fair elections," he said in a 1996 New Year address.

"I am perhaps the only dictator in the world who is calling for such elections," he once told a television interviewer.

But prostate cancer and a Tutsi-dominated revolt intervened, weakening his grip on the mineral-rich nation of 40 million people.

As Laurent Kabila's rebels have advanced from the east, capturing towns and territory, Mr Mobutu's popularity faded.

Ordinary Zaireans, weary of the ravages of his notoriously ill-disciplined army, poverty and widespread official corruption, have welcomed the rebels as liberators. Mr Kabila insisted he must quit. "There can be no ceasefire or indeed elections in this country until Mobutu and

all he represents is removed and thrown away," he said.

President Mobutu offered to resign and hand over to an elected successor, but Mr Kabila is insisting that power be transferred to his rebel alliance in the transition process.

The son of a cook and a hotel maid, Mr Mobutu, who stands 5ft tall, was born in Lisala, in Equateur province in 1930. Denounced as everything from a dictator to a thief, his critics accuse him of ruining what is potentially Africa's richest nation with a wealth of minerals and rich farmland.

A journalist named soldier, he seized power in 1965 after the old Belgian Congo descended into chaos after independence. Adopting a leopard-skin cap and bird-handled ebony cane as his trademarks, he has held onto power by keeping rivals in disarray, or by buying off his enemies.

He amassed a personal fortune and solidified his grip on the country with a system of economic and political patronage that made millionaires of his close associates. Most Zaireans remained mired in poverty. The word "kleptocracy", meaning a bureaucracy in which corruption is endemic, was coined with Zaire in mind.

Despite human rights abuses and his use of his position to enrich himself, Mr Mobutu became the darling of the United States and others in the West as a buffer against the Communist bloc. Washington relied on Zaire as a supply route for the US-backed National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita) rebel movement fighting a 17-year guerrilla war against the Marxist government of neighbouring Angola.

President Mobutu's usefulness to Washington faded as Soviet influence declined in Africa and Communism finally collapsed. His erstwhile friends began to look more closely at his human rights record.

Under pressure to make reforms, the Zairean leader opened a Pandora's box, when he permitted multi-party politics in April 1990 after more than two decades of single-party rule. At the same time, the mineral-based economy collapsed as production from vital copper mines in the south plummeted.

Mr Mobutu angered his Western backers, particularly Belgium, when his soldiers attacked a student hostel in 1990, killing dozens of students.

Belgium cut aid in response. Mass opposition to Mr Mobutu grew through 1991.

Surrounded by his Israeli-

trained presidential guard, he retreated to his opulent northern palace in Gbadolite, dubbed "Versailles in the Jungle", hurling defiance at his opponents. But the soldiers, angry at not receiving a pay rise, ran amok in Kinshasa in late 1991. France and Belgium sent in troops to protect foreign nationals. Looters killed at least 250 people.

Mr Mobutu's sacking in December 1992 of the reformist Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi, a one-time ally turned enemy, and the intimidation of the pro-democracy interim parliament by his presidential guard, brought further rebukes from abroad. France barred him from visiting his villa in the Riviera, while other countries denied him and his entourage visas.

Shrewd political manoeuvring enabled Mr Mobutu to neutralise a groundswell of

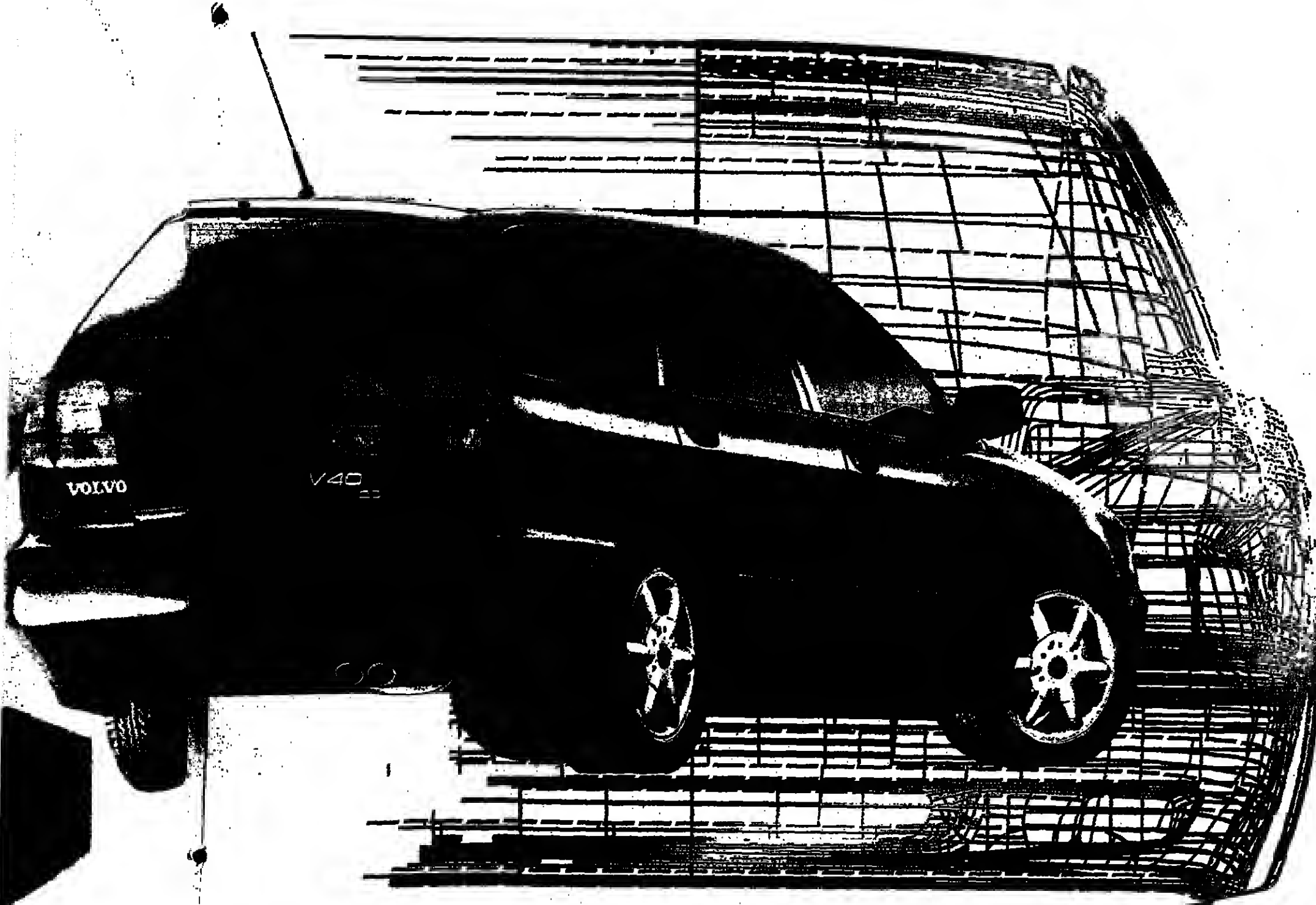
He held on to power by keeping rivals in disarray and buying off his enemies

public sympathy for Mr Tshisekedi. An impeachment threat by a transitional parliament came to nothing. Mr Mobutu, a pragmatist, began a process of rehabilitation with key donors — France, Belgium and the United States.

The 1994 exodus from Rwanda of over a million Hutus, fearing reprisals for the genocide of minority Tutsis there, worked in his favour. His co-operation helped to ease a humanitarian nightmare, bringing about a partial thaw in ties with the West. France softened its stance after he co-operated with a French military expedition to halt the Rwanda killings. In April 1996, Paris announced a resumption of aid after a five-year freeze.

In August 1996, Mobutu had prostate cancer surgery in Switzerland. In October, rebels took up arms in the east. As the Tutsi-led revolt spread, the rebels seized towns and territory and now control more than three-quarters of Zaire. Mr Mobutu, who spent much of the war convalescing in Europe, returned home on 22 March, in what many Zaire watchers saw as an attempt to negotiate a dignified withdrawal.

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Arafat and Weizman move to rebuild peace

The Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, will meet Israeli President Ezer Weizman tomorrow in an effort to lay the groundwork for resuming the stalled peace negotiations.

The US Middle East envoy, Dennis Ross, is expected to follow up that meeting with a visit to the region later in the week. The flurry of diplomatic activity raised hopes that the peace process's downward slide may have been halted and that progress was being made toward restarting talks.

AP — Jerusalem

Algeria bombs kill 15

Two car bombs killed 15 people and wounded 23 in hotels in a thermal springs resort in north-west Algeria at the weekend, the Algerian newspaper *Le Matin* said. The newspaper said the bombs exploded 10 minutes apart in Sidi Bouhanifia, about 325km (200 miles) from the capital, Algiers.

Reuters — Paris

Revenge threat to Suu Kyi

Members of a military-sponsored mass organisation that participated in a mob attack on the Burmese democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's motorcade last year vowed this weekend to punish the Nobel Peace Prize winner. More than 30,000 members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association condemned Ms Suu Kyi and the United States at a mass rally on Saturday in Rangoon.

AP — Bangkok

Racist Australian MP attacked

Protesters hurled tomatoes, eggs and insults yesterday in the second demonstration against a right-wing politician who has angered many Australians with her views denigrating Asians and Aborigines.

The attack on the independent MP Pauline Hanson was the most furious since she gained attention in Australia and in Asia with a provocative maiden speech in Parliament in September calling for an end to Asian immigration.

AP — Perth

Election violence in Indonesia

Indonesian soldiers wielding sticks dispersed a demonstration by Muslim youths in the central Javan city of Yogyakarta yesterday as tensions between contestants in Indonesia's election continued to rise.

Armed troops charged the protest by about 100 Muslim youths after they took to the streets to express anger against a recent attack on the local offices of the Muslim-oriented United Development Party (PPP).

Reuters — Yogyakarta

arts

DANCE

Royal Ballet triple bill
ROH, London

Balanchine detector vans patrol the globe making quite sure that any ballet company planning to perform one of the master's works has a valid licence to do so. Anthony Dowell had allowed the Royal Ballet's rights to *Apollo* to lapse last year but planned to revive the work this spring regardless. Oh no you don't, said the Balanchine Trust. Not only does it safeguard the steps, costumes and staging of the productions in its care, it also exercises strict quality-control over casting. Although more than happy with Darcey Bussell and Jonathan Cope – not to mention NYCB's Igor Zelenka, who was scheduled to guest in the ballet – the Americans were uncertain about Irek Mukhamedov. Maybe if he slimmed down? Could they give him the once-over at the final dress-rehearsal? This wasn't acceptable to Anthony Dowell, so the Trust withdrew the Royal Ballet's rights to perform the work at all and an 11th-hour substitute had to be found. Perhaps wishing to compensate Mukhamedov for the humiliating loss of *Apollo*, they settled on *The Judas Tree*. Kenneth MacMillan's dirty story of gang rape and betrayal. Whatever the technical merits of this nasty piece of work, it's a bloody strange ballet to substitute for the neo-classical masterpiece the audience had booked to see. Last Wednesday's crowd certainly seemed unhappy with the switch.

Viviana Durante, who created the role of the woman, always contrived to suggest a kind of sluttish innocence that enhanced the moral ambiguity of this peculiar character. Gillian Rees as yet demonstrates neither the dramatic power nor technical finesse required. Mukhamedov danced with more energy than conviction. The audience certainly wasn't thrilled and the general applause seemed to be sheer relief that the ordeal was over. The individual bows were literally uncalled for.

Glen Tetley's new work, *Amores*, was the programme's second ballet and used Darcey Bussell, Deborah Bull, Leanne Benjamin, Stuart Cassidy, William Trevitt and Michael Nunn. They fill the stage with Tetley's dynamic chains of soaring jumps and arduous lifts but the ideas seemed to run out very early on. The bath-salts pastels of Nadine Baylis body-suits and Michael Forke's curiously incidental music threw into terrible relief the athletic handiness of the choreography. The movement certainly told us nothing about the dancers that we didn't already know. Our disappointment was heightened by the fact that the Royal Ballet has so few opportunities to work with international choreographers.

When the curtain went up on the white tulle and the sunny sky of Rosenthal blue that herald Balanchine's *Symphony in C*, a ripple of appreciative delight ran round the stalls like a purr of satisfaction. This, they seemed to be saying, was much more like it. As it turned out, it wasn't all that much like it, but even when underperformed and hobbled by Barry Wordsworth's arthritic approximation of Bizet, the glamorous geometry of Balanchine's 1947 masterpiece ravishes the senses. Darcey Bussell, with her long lines and breathtaking facility, was born to dance Balanchine and her performance on its own would have been worth the licence fee.

Sat & 14, 15 May; Booking: 0171-304 4000

Louise Levene



Darcey Bussell in 'Amores' Laurie Lewis

The diva in me



Patti LuPone has had a remarkable number of near-encounters with Maria Callas: from almost attending the soprano's master classes to screen-testing for a Hollywood biopic. This week, the actress-singer is bringing her to life on stage, without singing a note. By Edward Seckerson

Sixteen years ago, Patti LuPone flew to Los Angeles to test for a movie based on Arianna Stassinopoulou's biography of Maria Callas. Call it a premonition, call it advance notice, if you like, but someone had glimpsed the future. Looking now at the photograph currently displayed all over London on posters announcing Terence McNally's smash hit Broadway play *Master Class*, you see what someone saw. Callas. In profile. Proud, intense, dangerous. A graven image in operatic terms. You see her, you hear her. You hear her, you know her. And you wonder what kept her.

Patti LuPone will tell you that she believes in destiny, in the pre-ordained, that she and La Diva had a date from the start. Right now they're pretty inseparable. It's called playing it by the method rule-hook. LuPone speaks for Callas, through Callas, just as Callas would speak through "the voice" (which is how she always referred to it – in the third person). And so, Maria said this. Maria believed that, Maria would never have countenanced such an idea. Maria is close by. There are definitely three of us in this interview. LuPone speaks a lot about "honouring" Callas. She's fiercely defensive about her integrity, her subordination to "the voice", the craft, the career. No, she was not selfish. She railed against selfish performers. She was selfish only for the composer. "She comprehended, realised, every note, every trill, every inflection... It's all in the music," she would say to her students. Come in pure, truthful...

The *La Diva* Collection plays constantly in LuPone's dressing-room at the Queen's Theatre. While her colleagues vocalise, she listens, digests. She has come to know all the nuances, and the reasons for them, she has come to share in the risk, the recklessness.

the sing-all, give-all nature of Callas's art, she has come to feel the distress of a damaged voice in her own voice.

LuPone knows about reckless, she knows about damage. She knows about laying herself on the line. She's had a hard time of it from some American critics who wish she wouldn't. Turn down the heat, turn down the volume, just turn it all down, they cry. But it's in the blood, Mediterranean blood, Mediterranean temperament. She's never known any different. She'd arrive hoarse for her singing lessons at the Juilliard School in New York City – the side-effect of too many cigarettes and show-tunes. Well, this was Juilliard preparatory, and she was a teenager.

Someone had seen and heard her potential. The voice was certainly there. For a time it was thought to be an operatic voice (remember we're talking here of the great-grand-niece and namesake of the celebrated lyric coloratura, Adeline Patli, sometime queen of Covent Garden). But opera didn't attract her. Childhood experiences at the old Met had left an indelible impression. She remembers *Samsen and Delilah*. Or rather, she remembers two very fat singers and a large bowl of fruit. Her body was better suited to song and dance. So on the day of her classical audition at Juilliard (she doesn't remember what she sang, but she remembers someone on the panel filling their nails), she got on a plane to LA to audition for the Melody Tent. You can imagine what kind of shows they put on.

Eventually, it was the Drama Division at Juilliard that claimed her. She started her career as a founding member of John Houseman's *The Acting Company*. And when the emotional stakes were so high that she could no longer speak – isn't that the definition of musical theatre? – she sang. And

the voice was a scorcher. A ready-to-go Reno Sweeney (the feisty Cole Porter heroine for whom "Anything Goes"), an Evita in waiting. And if Norma Desmond should ever sing... Perhaps it's better we stay silent on that one. She does.

LuPone is now roughly the same age that Callas was when she conducted her now legendary master classes at Juilliard. And before you ask, yes, she was there then, and no, she didn't go. The guilt is still with her. She's heard the tapes, seen the videos, and is now living the play. And, in living the play, she is reminded, she says, of a dedication and a sacrifice and a commitment that is rarely encountered today. Unless you happen to be preparing McNally's *Master Class*. It's a marathon. It took her seven and a half weeks

great tragic heroine it celebrates – is nothing if not operatic. Meaning fanciful, extravagant, theatre before it is documentary. The master class to end all master classes. And we've seen a few.

What a curious, oddly voyeuristic spectator sport this is. Singing legends as exhibits, "on-stage" and yet not on-stage, performing and yet not performing. Some treating the occasion as some kind of "stand-up" routine. Like the celebrated harpiste (and I have this one on good authority) who, before going out on-stage, asked the young tenor if he could be sure that the problematic B-flat was a problem so that he had something to work with, so that he – in other words – could make a drama out of the crisis. I also have this indelible image of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf quelling the rupture

wishing for a moment that anyone should think it was a one-off, a fluke. Schwarzkopf did it again, and again, while Callas laid hands on her as if she were some freak of nature. Who knows what the subtext of that one was...

The subtext of McNally's play is the elusiveness of great artistry, and what it costs in human terms. It's that aspect of the play which consumes LuPone nightly. She doesn't find anything about the play negative. "It's the tragedy of Callas's life that is negative." In that, she is markedly different from Zoe Caldwell, who first played the role on Broadway – "wildly different", according to the director, Leonard Foglia. There's a line in the play where she, Callas, announces that what she possesses is "something that can't be taught or passed on or copied or even talked about". Caldwell, played the edge, the cynicism of the line. She was grand, she was patronising. LuPone aims to play the toughness but not the condescension. "She drives the students hard, of course she does. That's all

she knows. I remember being told by John Cassavetes as an actor: 'Stop being so professional; be an amateur, let yourself go, make mistakes.' And that's basically what she is saying to the second-act soprano – the one who walks out on her. She's saying, 'Who are you saving yourself for?' And immediately, of course, you're reminded of the damage to her own voice. Later, she realises that this singer simply doesn't have the inspiration for a role like Verdi's Lady Macbeth. And tells her so. And that is cruel. But it's also the hard truth, for Callas the only truth... a quality she recognises immediately. Like when the young tenor sings 'Recondita armonia' from *Tosca*...

That's an interesting scene. For the first time in this master class, Callas does not interrupt. She is transported. But Zoe Caldwell suggested that she had not heard a single note, rather that she was simply preoccupied with her own thoughts, her own reminiscences. "No, I don't see it that way. She's reawakened. This is the first time that someone in the class has really opened up to her. And it's like a flirtation – this young Cavaradossi, whose only thoughts are for her: 'Il mio solo pensiero, Tosca sei tu!' And maybe because I'm that much younger than Zoe, and because I have access to music, I can convey a different feeling. It isn't over for me yet. And yet some things are receding. It's like Callas sees in this moment what was and what might be no more. And that's very moving. I hope."

So how does it feel: a singer among singers and not a note to sing? "It's a cakewalk – it really is. Hey, I can go on stage hoarse, I can go on stage with a cold – and I can use it! Strangely enough, though, there's actually more, not less, stress on those two tiny muscles. There's a lot of attack and anger in this role – some of it very abrupt. Now, when you sing, you remember to breathe. You remember to place. When you're acting, it's not exactly exciting to remember all that stuff, is it...?"

And this lady does so like to be exciting, and yes, reckless, and yes, high on the emotion of the moment. McNally, she says, has written arias – not speeches, "arias" – and with the sound of La Diva herself interwoven through their fabric, it's as if she, Patti LuPone, is singing. It's been 12 years since she was last in a "straight" play. People want the voice, people want the musicals, "and they haven't always been fun", she adds pointedly. Still, if she ever does get this little problem called Maria out of her system, then London's bracing itself for that one-woman show of hers. *Opens tomorrow, Queen's Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1 (0171-494 5590)*

It's a cakewalk, it really is. Hey, I can go on stage, hoarse, I can go on stage with a cold – and I can use it!

just simply getting the words down. Then came the voice work, the accent, the Italian. The research. *Master Class* is the work of – to quote the *Independent's* Paul Taylor – "a fully paid-up Callas freak who once put two fully paid-up Callas freaks centre-stage in his play *The Lisbon Traviata*". It will be interesting to see how fully paid-up Callas freaks on this side of the Atlantic will respond to the dramatic licence, the "deliberate mistakes". And there are one or two. Doesn't every self-respecting opera queen know that E-flat and not F is the commonest high note interpolation for big finishes in the Italian repertoire? Even if it does snag the rhythm of McNally's text.

No matter, the play's the thing, and McNally's play – like the

ous applause of a large audience with an imperious wave of her hand: "Please, you must understand, we are here to work. This is not about me..." But, of course, it was about her. Just as *Master Class* is about Maria Callas. And while we're on the subject of these monstrous sacred, did you hear the one about the world premiere of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the Venice Festival in 1951. Schwarzkopf was on-stage. Callas in the audience. At intermission, everyone was talking about the diva's spectacular top C at the close of Anne Trulove's big aria. Cut to post-performance in a nearby restaurant, and enter Callas, full of praise for Schwarzkopf's performance, not least that fabulous C. Such a quality note: how did she do it? Not

catching frogspawn. Indeed, the project is itself a dream from boyhood. Of the day when, trespassing in the grounds, he caught a glimpse through French windows of a woman in a yellow dress in a music-room. Martin is determined to recreate that room and has even hired the improbably new-english, rebarbative Sian (Sara Griffiths) to teach him piano so that he can play the Debussy he is certain belongs to the idyll.

Andrew Neil's Martin has a lusty, scatty charm that can only make us admire his practical energy and eagerness to be reborn. But we soon recognise that there is something unconvincing, even desperate, in his desire to leave the past behind. We notice how his heritage-speak all comes from Alan Rothwell's pursed, self-interested Philip, and much less subtly, there is the glowing return of his footloose son Ralph (Sean O'Callaghan). He and his brisk, practical sister Aileen (excellent Sarah Mortimer) are aggrieved in different ways at their father from way back and cannot turn over a new leaf lightly. Martin, it seems, is hurrying pain in his admiration of sandalwood. Yet, for all Ralph's cries about a house built on cruelty,

and his self-laceration at leaving his sick mother in his father's uncaring hands, I was never convinced of Martin's dark nature. Except, however, when he instantly repudiates Aileen when he believes she has betrayed him. Andrew Neil's puckish countenance freezes into a frightening hatred then, and we see how he has willed the ensuing destruction.

This is a thorough play that moves with a restorer's patience and care, but also with his slowness. At its best, it has the texture of a realist novel but the key characters of Ralph and Sian are little more than ciphers. As always with this fine, independent writer, the deliberation of the work is never less than absorbing, but on this occasion, the gleam of discovery is not quite bright enough. Booking: 01732 717962 To 24 May

Jeffrey Wainwright

INSTALLATION ART

Still Ringing

The Old Leadworks, Bristol

choreographer Thom Stuart's orchestrations of expressionist movements from the locally recruited cast of extras, were vividly alive.

Inspired by the legends of spirit-world campanology from the Suffolk town that fell into the sea, and with libretti taken from – among other sources – the shipping forecast, the company successfully communicated the sense of a drowned world through a series of brilliantly staged poetic images: the poignant futility of hands cupping water; the uncomfortable dance of bare soles balancing precariously on pebbles. Using the depth of the building to maximum effect, the show unfolded with a real

sense of space, with obscure ensemble-movements in the farthest reaches echoed by front-of-stage performances by Pook and Ottaway on violins and the magnetic appeal of Pappenheim's extraordinary voice and presence. Mixing live and pre-recorded sources, the score veered between Pappenheim's melancholy French horn solos and Ottaway and Pook's ambient and ethnic variations on devotional music, with a strong sense of emblematic English pastoral to the fore. And as they played, the female chorus hopped, scooped around the set like a regiment of monstrous girls from a painting by Paula Rego. The closing movement,

written by Pook – the composer of everyone's favourite mobile-phone ad, the Orange number that uses a sample of Kathleen Ferrier's voice on "Blow the Wind Southerly" – provided a wonderful climax, as Pappenheim walked round the set pushing the hanging chairs, doors, windows and dressers into motion.

As country-kitchen furniture flew dream-like through the air, and the air became water, *Still Ringing* more than fulfilled its promise. Though there were frustrating moments when either too much or too little appeared to be going on, the overall mix of music and mise-en-scène was satisfyingly resolved, with the whole amounting to a rewarding blend of the English, and the English-eccentric, traditions. By the end, even the hellish bells sounded like a good idea.

Phil Johnson

THEATRE

Overture

New Vic,
Newcastle-under-Lyme

catching frogspawn. Indeed, the project is itself a dream from boyhood. Of the day when, trespassing in the grounds, he caught a glimpse through French windows of a woman in a yellow dress in a music-room. Martin is determined to recreate that room and has even hired the improbably new-english, rebarbative Sian (Sara Griffiths) to teach him piano so that he can play the Debussy he is certain belongs to the idyll.

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nise that there is something unconvincing, even desperate, in his desire to leave the past behind. We notice how his heritage-speak all comes from Alan Rothwell's pursed, self-interested Philip, and much less subtly, there is the glowing return of his footloose son Ralph (Sean O'Callaghan). He and his brisk, practical sister Aileen (excellent Sarah Mortimer) are aggrieved in different ways at their father from way back and cannot turn over a new leaf lightly. Martin, it seems, is hurrying pain in his admiration of sandalwood. Yet, for all Ralph's cries about a house built on cruelty,

Tomorrow in the Tabloid: Tom Lubbock on the late flowering of David Hockney; Michael Glover on psychiatry and poetry



Graham McPherson, aka Suggs: Madness, he says, became the family he never had. He loved the other boys in the band. They loved him. He belonged

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Exile from the house of fun

Suggs used to be the larky boy in the pork-pie hat and Mod suit who, throughout much of the Eighties, looked like he was having a lot of fun while having a lot of hits. "Our house, in the middle of the street... Or, if you like, 'It must be love, love, love.' Or... no, no, I must stop myself here. I'm sure you don't want the entire song list. But I was, at one time, very fond of Madness, as you can see. 'Welcome to the house of fun, da-da-da-da-da'."

Madness were, and I think most would agree with me here, a great band with a great sound. They were reggae and ska and fairground with lots of berserk instrumentation and big sax noises thrown in. They were Suggs jumping about and singing in a very British, old-pan way, about his house, his baggy trousers or his girl being mad in him. Madness were original and honest and looked as if they never took things too seriously, which they didn't. The band were very good, says Suggs, at keeping each others' egos in check. "People would kick your legs out from under you all the time. Talking to David Bowie? You wanker! How much did you spend on those taps? £20 each? At Liberty? You gone mad, wanker?"

Anyway, Suggs is now 36. Or 37. He can't quite remember which. He is still handsome, although not in that larky, joyous, boyish way. He is chunkier, with a very square jaw, big shoulders and big hands, like prize hams. Today, he is wearing a lionel jasper Conran suit (Jasper Conran? You gone mad?) teamed with a neon blue shirt. He does-

n't know where the shirt is from. Channel 5 got it for him. "That's the great thing about doing telly," he beams. "They get your clothes for you."

Suggs now hosts Channel 5's *Night Fever*, a sort of karaoke quiz show on Saturday evenings. The show's not great, frankly, unless you are into E-list celebrities (Sonia San Fox and those are the ones you've heard of) pretending they are The Carpenters. No, Suggs doesn't think it's a bad. He's long fancied doing telly. "I would look at Chris Evans and think: 'I can do that.' He has also just recorded 'Blue Day', a single for Chelsea FC, which is released today. No, this isn't a bad either. He has long supported Chelsea. It was an honour. Yes, he does have to work. No, Madness never made him lastingly rich. It could have, but 'I drive money away on eating, drinking and making merry,' he says.

The thing about being a pop star is that, unless you are Paul McCartney, you will probably have one day to face not being a pop star any more. Suggs has had to face this and is facing it still. Recently, he tried to get his two teenage daughters backstage at a Blur concert. "I queued up with all the other losers going, 'excuse me, excuse me,' until my shame dragged me away," he says.

To his credit, Suggs says this cheerfully rather than despondently but, still, it's been hard for him. The toughest period, he says, came just after Madness disbanded in 1988. Then, Suggs had what you or I might refer to as a breakdown but which he refers to as "a time when I just felt very fucked-up".

Whatever, it was enough to make him

Interview



Deborah Ross
talks to
SUGGS

do something he swore he would never do. He consulted a psychiatrist. And? Well, the psychiatrist told him that if he was to come to terms with not being Suggs of Madness any more, then he would have to come to terms with a lot of other things, too. In particular, he might want to go back and look at what went on when he was plain Graham McPherson (his real name) and a kid and no one bothered to stick around for him. To accept himself now, he was advised, he would have to accept himself as he was then, too.

Suggs's childhood, if you can call it that, was not a happy business. His mother, Eddie, was a failed singer who became a

barmaid and thereafter drifted wherever puh work took her. He never knew his father, who left when Suggs was three. He has since discovered only three things about him: his name is William; he liked jazz; he was a heroin addict, and probably still is, if he's still alive. Yes, Suggs has been tempted to trade him down. And once, as a teenager, he got quite close, but in the end decided not to go the distance. "It should be up to him to find me, shouldn't it?" he says. And if he did, would you see him? "Yeah, I expect so. Although you never know. It happened to John Lennon, didn't it, and he told his father to piss off."

His early years were spent with his mother, living in bedsits or rooms in other people's houses in London. His earliest memory is of a piece of string (people thought such things decorative in those days, apparently) and going to the toilet in some kind of pan. His schools chopped and changed constantly. It was hard to make friends, and even when he did it wasn't as if he could invite them back for spaghetti hoops on toast. It would have been too embarrassing for all concerned. Often, they had no bathroom.

Yes, he was very lonely as a kid, and perhaps no more so than when he was eight and his mother dispatched him to his Auntie Diana, her sister, in Haverfordwest, south Wales. He thought he was going on a holiday. Broule was, no one came to pick him up for three years. What was his mother doing during this period? He hasn't a clue. It was, he says, "a mystery, that".

Yes, he was very bitter. And full of guilt. (If he'd been more lovable, would he have been dumped like this?) And he was angry, too, with an anger that, he says, refused to go away for a very long time.

His Auntie Diana was kind to him. And, at first, he liked being in the country. It made a change from being squashed up with his mother. He liked the fields and the freedom and going about eating apples and shooting rats. But Auntie Diana had three children of her own, who he got along with well enough but, still, he never felt he belonged or was truly loved. When, later, I ask him if he can remember receiving any affection whatsoever during his childhood he laughs then says: "Well, whenever I ran away from the people who brought me straight back always seemed very nice."

At 11, just after he had started at a Welsh grammar school, he was sent back to his mother in London, his aunt and uncle having decided to split up. He joined his mum in a bedsit over a carpet shop on Tottenham Court Road and was sent to a tough boys' comprehensive off the Finchley Road. On his first day, he wore his Welsh grammar school uniform. Come lunchtime, he got his dinner on his head and ice-cream in his face. The first song he ever wrote, "Baggy Trousers", was about the school. "Naughty boys in nasty schools/ Headmasters breaking all the rules/ Having fun and playing fools/ Breaking up the woodwork tools..." Needless to say, he didn't learn very much there, which he thinks a shame, because he had liked learning.

From 13, he stopped going to school, nicked a lot of records and changed his name. He chose Suggs from a jazz dictionary. Apparently, there is a jazz flautist called Pete Suggs. It was tiring going about saying, "I'm not Graham any more, I'm Suggs," but he was determined, unlike his best mate, "He changed his

name to Keg. But he gave up after a couple of weeks. He got fed up of it."

Madness were formed in 1977. They were six teenagers who'd been brought together by a north London youth club and a love of Jamaican and jazz music. They practised in everyone's front room apart from Suggs's, because he didn't have a front room. They were brilliantly innocent. When they went on their first ever tour, one of the band members said he couldn't go to Wales because he didn't have a passport. Later, they got to stay in Gstaad with David Bowie who has a house there, but they never became wholly starstruck. "Unfortunately, Bowie was going through one of his straight periods. He wasn't drinking or anything. 'Night boys,' he'd say at 9pm. It was rather disappointing."

All in all, Madness put 21 singles into the Top 20 before getting bored ("once the initial veneer wore off, it became just a job") and coming apart. At which point, Suggs came apart too.

Madness, he says, became the family he never had. It sounds clichéd, he knows, but that doesn't make it any less true. He loved the other boys in the band. They loved him. He belonged. ("The biggest high was the sense of belonging.") He was wanted. He adored performing for audiences who, in turn, seemed to adore him. Then it all went. And he couldn't cope. He went to the psychiatrist. He thought he had nothing to lose.

"I was feeling very frightened, very scared, very insecure. The psychiatrist was brilliant. He could have given me a lot of fancy theories and told me to come back daily for the next 65 years - what I told him set his pencil on fire - but instead he told me I might be better off just accepting myself for who I am. Having never known any security, I would always feel insecure, and the thing to do was accept that and just get on with life. I have since become much more philosophical. Yes, I do miss the fame. I still miss Madness. When we re-formed for two gigs in 1992 and 1994, it was fantastic. To get everyone jumping up and down again was just such a high."

"But, basically, I'm the sort of bloke who likes going down the pub, singing, and taking his kids to the seaside. That's who I am, and I'm happy with that."

Suggs has a wife and two daughters without whom, he says, he would probably have stopped functioning a long time ago. He married Anne, formerly the lead singer with Deaf School, in 1982. Thankfully, he says, she comes from a very stable background so has been able to instruct him in the ways of family life. He is mad, he says, about his kids. They are teenagers now, but still he can't wait for "the two noisy hooligans" to get back from school so he can give them big bear hugs. Yes, of course he'd have liked his parents to have felt this way about him. But they had too many of their own problems. It was never to do with him. It was to do with them. He can see that now. He isn't angry any more, he says.

So, Suggs is a bloke who has had to come to terms with a lot of things. Perhaps he's succeeded. Perhaps he hasn't. Whatever, he used to make good music and, hopefully, will do so again. He has a solo album coming out in the summer. Meanwhile, you can always play the old hits, which are as good today as they ever were. "My girl's mad at me..." "Dance?" I'd love to.

Kids. Aren'tcha sick of them?

America's champion of the cot-free zone wants the same rights parents have. By Tim Cornwell

Build a palace and they will come; in America, build a soap box and someone will listen. Leslie Lafayette is the author of *Why Don't You Have Kids? - Living a Full Life Without Parenthood* and the founder of the Child-Free Network, an organisation designed to give voice to the childless "by choice" or "by circumstance".

It claims only 2,000 paid-up members, but Ms Lafayette's complaint that childless people are virtual non-citizens in America has earned her plenty of air time, including the biggest chat shows: Oprah, Geraldo, *Good Morning America*. "If you people are as baby-happy as this culture," she begins, "then you could use a little slap in the face."

She promises a rousing interview and, sure enough, she delivers, blaming breeding families for everything from overcrowded national parks to nasty scenes in restaurants. Ms Lafayette demands not to be confused with a "crotchety old witch that hates kids". But it is plain she loves nothing better than stirring it up. For three-quarters of an hour, she sings the virtues of a child-free life in a country where the raising of children is virtually a religious act, and "family" is the cornerstone of morality.

At one point, she compares children to "other people's litter". If the human race ended tomorrow, she says, the world would still keep turning. Most parents she has heard from say they would "never do it again", she says earnestly. They find parenting "quite difficult, frustrating, very demanding and very expensive".

A schoolteacher for 17 years, Ms Lafayette found her calling during the election campaign of 1992, when everyone from Dan Quayle to Bill Clinton was expounding on family values. "It was really just too much to stomach. If you didn't have kids, you were completely invisible. I paid taxes; I was a homeowner; I had made a contribution, and no one cared about my needs at all."

The family-values bandwagon did not stop with the 1992 election. The first piece of legislation Bill Clinton signed as President was the Family Leave Bill, establishing a three-month leave of absence for births or family emergencies. As his first four-year term ended, several senior cabinet members resigned to spend more

'Why are we rewarding people for having children?'

time with spouses and children. It led a spokeswoman for New York's Families and Work Institute to observe, proudly, that Family with a Capital F had "become an important value, even compared to being at the centre of power in the most powerful country in the world."

In response, Ms Lafayette has championed the cause of childless people in the American workplace against a corporate culture that boasts of being increasingly family-friendly. It's an issue that has struck home. A serious grievance among childless adults, it appears, is that parents get the pick of vacation time, flexible hours and sick leave, not to mention in-house nurseries, and medical benefits, and shelter from tough assignments or arduous travel. Statistics show that in America 66 per cent of employees at any time are *not* rearing children under 18. And nearly half, in one poll, said parents received more support from employers than non-parents.

Some companies have been adjusting their policies to redress the balance. Eastman Kodak, for example, which Ms Lafayette holds up as a glowing example, now offers employees a three-month leave of absence for a "personal unique opportunity", the alternative to family leave. Others, of course, have extended pensions and benefits to "domestic partners", gay or heterosexual.

Work aside, the tax law encourages people to have children. Ms Lafayette complains. Under US law, it is even illegal to have adults-only housing, except in a retirement community where everyone is over 55. "My question is, why are we rewarding people for having children in a situation in which we are downsizing, we have pollution problems, the market is shrinking? I don't think it's any special deal that needs to be rewarded."

Ms Lafayette, 52, divorced and a resident of Sacramento, state capital of California, had a miscarriage in her early forties that was "quite devastating", but her marriage was not a strong one and she wanted a child for the wrong reasons, she says. She runs a café serving breakfast and lunch where there are, yes, booster seats and crayons are supplied. "I can't tell people not to bring kids; that would be against the law. And I personally don't think it would be the right thing to do."

But I see the TV producers' dream: stick her on a talk show opposite anyone from the "God and Family" crowd. "There are so many incredible people who were childless, starting with Jesus himself," she says. "I think he was very busy doing his work. Florence Nightingale, Beethoven, the Wright Brothers, Mother Teresa, Jane Austen - they don't have to be objects of pity and scorn."

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the leader page

Will the real Tory parties please stand up?

The fate of the Conservative Party is not a private matter. Yes, Tory MPs' preoccupation with place and personality is understandable; the disarray of Central Office and the party in the country follows naturally from Thursday night's dramatic turn of events. But Tory MPs should not lose sight of their constitutional duty. They are Her Majesty's Opposition. They may share the task of keeping Labour honest with the Liberal Democrats and, in Wales and Scotland, with the nationalists. In these heady days, with their support in the House of Commons so assured, Labour ministers might be tempted to abuse their power; in their inexperience they might break rules. Labour will, we hope, engage quickly with the task of constitutional renewal, especially the reformation and modernisation of the House of Commons itself. But until it does, the old adage holds: proper procedure is the best protection we have against executive tyranny and the Tories, truncated and demoralised as they may be, have a vital job to do, for example in revitalising the Public Accounts Committee and the select committees of the Commons. Recent Tory experience of the corruption of office ought to make them all the more alert to its first signs on the Labour benches.

Yet the political effectiveness of the Conservative Party depends on its honesty about itself and the meaning of the

electorate's rejection at the ballot box of its stands on Europe, social policy, parliamentary probity. Tory MPs may rush ahead and elect a new leader but the contest, however exciting, cannot substitute for the ideological re-working that must take place. That in return requires stern contemplation of the possibility that the Tories may never again be a united party. John Major deliberately precipitated this scramble by announcing his immediate departure – and his action was all the more calculated since he knew the very infrastructure of the parliamentary Tory party had been destroyed. Pique or revenge? Whatever his intention, he is the impresario of a brawl. The Marquess of Queensberry has evidently not been invited to write the rules. One of yesterday's choicer cuts (unnamed ex-minister on William Hague's likely hair loss and hence unelectability): "this guy is a golfball".

The Tories owe their country and the millions who voted for them last week better than this. Conservatism is evidently not going to depart for an extended away-day and produce some "mission statement". Inevitably the Tories will be tempted merely to react to the Blair phenomenon, trying like alchemists of old to discern how the base metal of Old Labour was turned into political gold. There will be calls – we have heard them already – for the appointment of a Tory version of Peter

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Mandelson, for the stiffening of Central Office's authority over unruly local associations, for feminising the Tories' pin-striped ranks. But these are means to an end – which is what?

The old answer, that the Tories wanted power broadly to maintain the position of the "haves", just won't do. Too many of their "isms" clash and conflict. Are the Tories to be a party of an intellectually consistent conservatism, one unfriendly towards change in the way the government is run but which also dislikes change (for example lost jobs) brought about by the operations of the capitalist system?

Abstract thought comes most easily to the likes of John Redwood, but all the Tory contenders are obliged to work through some key ideas. What is it exactly that the governments of nation states can do to affect their comparative advantage in the face of global forces of trade and investment; why are the French right wrong in asserting that globalisation demands a stronger European federation not a weaker one?

The Thatcher-Major years bequeathed two great puzzles to Tories. One is how to justify their refusal to modernise our politics when advocating wholesale change and renewal in the economic

field. To argue, for example, that trades unions are the enemies of economic progress without accepting that the operations of a landed syndicate in the House of Lords also constitutes a barrier to forward movement in government is not merely inconsistent, it is self-defeating. The other deep paradox is not new. Since the Victorian era, Toryism has tried to be simultaneously liberal in economics and illiberal in social affairs. The task becomes ever harder. Post Major, in the light of this election result, the Conservative Party must think through the consequences of the fact that there is such a thing as society. And above all there is Europe.

There is nothing inevitable about Toryism as a single political formation. That there will always be one or more political parties which espouse the interests of the possessors of property – that is a reasonable prediction based on the structure of politics in all the advanced democracies. But not all such parties are nationalists. The property or business party could easily define itself stoutly in favour of Europe, single currency and all. Why not two parties of property, divided by their European attitudes? If Labour were to seize the hour and make an indelible mark on the history of this country by reforming our electoral system, the entire basis of party affiliation might change. All of which is a long-winded way of saying that in a post-ideological age

Michael Howard and Kenneth Clarke might as well lead different parties – Mr Clarke said as much about John Redwood yesterday. The party of Rorke's Drift (yes, that was the key historical reference advanced by Mr Howard in a Sunday newspaper) cannot surely be the same as the pro-business, socially concerned, pro-European entity Mr Clarke has spent his political life trying to build.

A tighter rein for voluntary bodies

Shenanigans at the National Confederation of Parent-Teacher Associations raise questions about how well voluntary organisations are run. Ideally the National Council for Voluntary Organisations should act as a guarantor. But at present nobody outside their ranks is able to keep tabs on how effective they are. Charities are obliged by law to account for how they raise and spend their money. The Charities Commission has powers of supervision but often seems unable to head off problems. Voluntary bodies such as the NCPA, children's charities and the National Trust ought to be free from government interference, but they also occupy "public space" and the public needs to be assured they are behaving properly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Let this be the last absurd 'landslide'

Sir: Your leading article of 3 May points out in words the arithmetical absurdity of the election result and the need to look at our first-past-the-post system. The actual figures are set out in the table.

Our system has yet again produced a House of Commons that bears little relationship to what the voters voted for. The Labour landslide is in reality a relatively small percentage shift in voting patterns producing a wholly disproportionate percentage change in the number of seats obtained by the parties. Labour did not achieve an overall majority of votes but it has been given absolute control of Parliament. It is over-represented by a staggering 126 seats. The Conservatives are under-represented by 39 seats and the Liberal Democrats by 66 seats.

As usual, there are other distortions. The Liberal Democrats doubled their number of seats on a 1 per cent reduction in their share of the vote; the Conservatives obtained nearly 20 per cent of the vote in Wales and Scotland, but they have no seats in either, leading to

	Lab	Cons	L-D
Votes %	44.5	31.1	17.7
Seats %	63.6	24.7	11.7
Seats won	419	165	46
Seats in proportion to votes	293	204	112

the jibe from their opponents that they are now a parochial English party. These distortions cannot be tolerated in a modern democracy.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats are committed to a referendum on PR. It is to be hoped that the Conservatives, after what happened to them on 1 May, will also see the need for radical reform. The Labour government must not change its position on a referendum on PR now that it is the beneficiary of the distortion in our electoral system. It must use the absolute power given to it by that distortion to reform the voting system before the next general election.

DAVID L COMES
Berkhamshead, Herefordshire

Sir: Tony Blair could not have been more wrong when he said that Britain is not a landslide country. It is precisely because we have first-past-the-post voting that such extreme results are possible. Its replacement by a new system should be a priority of the new government; otherwise we may see a Conservative landslide sometime in the next century.

P J STEWART
Oxford

Sir: As my son pointed out to me in the early hours of 2 May, it's quite a thought that, under the proportional representation systems used in most of Europe, one of the Tory cabinet would have lost their seats.

HENRY ETTINGHAUSEN
Professor of Spanish
University of Southampton

Sir: A stunning result for New Labour; a splendid one for the Lib Dems. But will this be the dawn of new electoral hope or the confirmation of electoral injustice? Here in Teignbridge, 62,945 people who voted, 38,266 (60.8 per cent) of us did not get the MP we wanted. We are effectively disenfranchised.



So, a clarion call to Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown: we unseen, unheard, forgotten, and disgruntled voters look to you for electoral reform. JENNIFER BASSETT
Exminster, Devon

Unsleeping ministers

Sir: I hope the reforming zeal of the new administration stretches to changing the procedures for transferring power from one party to the next. It is ridiculous that men and women who are exhausted after a gruelling six-week election campaign are taking over as ministers without time for proper rest and recuperation.

Anyone who has read the diaries and biographies of senior politicians will know that they will have to digest huge amounts of information and make very big decisions in the next few days. It would be far better if there was a week between election day and the take-over of the new ministers in order to allow them to rest before they take up the biggest jobs of their lives and start to make huge decisions that affect all our lives.

Green Tories

Sir: Since the Conservatives' constituency seems more or less reduced to just the English shire counties, is it not time to consider changing the party emblem from a blue torch to a green willow? JOHN MOON
Andover, Hampshire

New Commons, same old chamber

Sir: Not everything has changed. When Tony Blair's new democrats assemble for parliamentary business, it will be in Charles Barry's 150-year-old chamber, a cramped hall designed for confrontational, two-party politics.

If a new democracy is to sweep us into the new millennium, it is time, too, for our representatives to work in modern, efficient surroundings. Sentiment and tradition aside, all our MPs (and the people they serve) merit both decent offices and a functional fan-shaped debating chamber. Rather than the transient ideas mooted for Greenwich, would it not be more fitting to pour the talents and resources of the nation into creating an assembly building fit for the 21st century?

Big win for the no-vote party

Sir: The suggestion that the way to get young people to vote is to make sure they are "thoroughly trained in judgement" through "the compulsory teaching of philosophy in schools" (Letters, 29 April) might well have the reverse effect. The more people are educated, the more likely they are to see through the lies and limitations of all the political

parties and to refuse to vote for any of them.

In the recent general election by far the biggest swing was from voters to non-voters, who increased by more than 30 per cent to nearly 29 per cent of the electorate, the highest figure since the Second World War, and are now the second largest group in the country. NICOLAS WALTER
London N1

Sir: I was alarmed by the letter from Dr Nanu Grewal (29 April) which implied that we should consider making voting compulsory. This would be a fundamental infringement of civil liberties.

There are people (I am not one of them) who feel that all the political parties are equally bad. They have the right to express their views by not voting. As for the apathetic, it is up to the political parties to convince them that they're worth voting for.

JOHN BURRIDGE
Southampton

Out, out, out!

Sir: Following Labour's landslide victory, are there any other readers who would like to join me in a pressure group dedicated to the cause of ensuring that the likes of Lord Lloyd-Webber, Paul Daniels and Frank Bruno do not renege upon their promises to leave the country?

JUNE DIAMANTI
Newcastle upon Tyne

We claim a tactical victory

Sir: No one can doubt that informed and targeted tactical voting helped to win the day. Not only did it turn a Labour victory into a Tory rout; it also delivered the largest group of third party MPs since the 1920s.

Stephen Twigg acknowledged that it was Liberal Democrats voting "effectively" that helped his Labour team deprive Michael Portillo of his seat.

GROTTI feel entirely vindicated – despite "spin doctor" hostility throughout the election campaign. Tactical voting has beaten Tory hegemony under first past the post. Now we must all push to replace it with a proportional and more representative system.

RICHARD DENTON-WHITE
Co-Chair
GROTTI! The Tactical Voting Campaign
London N16

Asylum blot

Sir: Your headline quotation from Jean Jacques Rousseau (1 May), to the effect that the English people are free only during the period of an election, is given an ironic echo in another article on the front page. Here we learn that the same freedom is enjoyed and evidently exploited by civil servants who are suddenly freed from accountability to

government or Parliament.

The revelation that 12,000 "sensitive" asylum cases have been "resolved" by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate through a special unit – "coincidentally" put to work after the dissolution of Parliament – should be a source of national shame. Organisations concerned with refugees and asylum-seekers have repeatedly called for an increase in the number of trained staff available to deal with the huge backlog of asylum applications – all to no avail. Suddenly we learn that the cases of 600 people have been dealt with in three weeks, during a political vacuum which means that they have been deprived of support or advice from Members of Parliament and may be deported without proper government accountability.

Too much of our immigration law depends on unpublished guidelines interpreted subjectively by largely unaccountable officials, but this marks a new blot on our reputation as a haven for the oppressed.

CHAS RAWES
Christian Action for Justice in Immigration Law
Glasgow

Twist to the left

Sir: Mr Ryan's strictures on champagne socialists (Letters, 3 May) might carry more weight if he had not ignored the advice of those who make the stuff in Epemay. Never twist the cork: hold it still and gently twist the bottle. COLIN ROCHESTER
London SE21

A pedestrian's right to choke

Sir: Hurrah for Jonathan Glancey, at last someone has the courage to speak out against the whingeing pedestrian lobby, who seem incapable of understanding that pedestrians really enjoy the hustle, noise and smell of traffic ("It's time to step on the cult of the pedestrian", 25 April).

For the past 10 years we have been entertaining foreign visitors to our bustling city. The first thing these simple folk from provincial towns in France or Spain want to do is to see what we have come to call the triangle, the race track formed by the roads (for that is what we should call them, not streets) connecting Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey and Trafalgar Square.

They enjoyed being pinned on the narrow pavement between the railings of Buckingham Palace and the crowd control barriers on the kerb, while taxis, and Mr Glancey's Jag, rounded the Victoria Monument on two wheels on their way to London's nearest approach to gridlock, Trafalgar Square. Sadly this is no more; the road in front of the Palace has been shut to traffic, and tourists can reach the steps of the Memorial without risking their lives.

The only excitement left is in attempting to cross to and from St James's Park. So far Trafalgar Square is untouched – it is best visited on Saturday, when Londoners have more time than in the week to enjoy a really good snarl-up – but this is now under threat. If these ideas are implemented, then much else will soon be at stake; it can only be a matter of time before the citizen's inalienable right to be asphyxiated while crossing Hyde Park Corner will be taken away.

We must rally to the defence of our city and defend it from Foster's pernicious suburban proposals. ALAN KENNEDY
London SW72

British terror stalked the world

Sir: Bernie Grant's attack on the use of racist symbols by the Labour Party ("Blacks play race card on Labour", 29 April), while heartfelt, is unsupported by his chosen evidence.

As far as I can see, the bulldog has never been used by any British regiment as a mascot. As well as "terrorise people in Africa", the British Army has "terrorised" all the major nations of the world from Europe to India, regardless of colour. "Rule Britannia" was more likely to be sung by the sailors of the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars and after, including when they were arresting slave ships off the coast of Africa, and "Land of Hope and Glory" wasn't actually written until after the end of the Zulu Wars. GRAHAM EVANS
Northampton

Moral majority

Sir: I am experiencing just one problem coming to terms with the result of the general election. My moral high ground has been invaded and now it's crowded up here. Just where did all these people come from? MADELAINE HEANEY
Northampton

That's politics but it hurts

The public enjoyed seeing Ken Clarke and his belongings into a fire

That's politics, but it hurts

Middle-aged, past their best... Spare a thought for the Tories at the end of the road, says Tristan Garel-Jones

That the Conservative Party had lost office and many of its friends their seats finally came home to me on Friday morning at 8.15. The Prime Minister telephoned from No 10 and we had a brief chat. At the end of the call we agreed to speak over the weekend but then it suddenly occurred to both of us that we weren't quite sure what his home telephone number was! Years of reliance on the Downing Street switchboard will have left many colleagues scratching around for the numbers of their closest friends. It's the best switchboard in the world. I remember when I was a Foreign Office minister trying to contact a colleague from a phone box in southern Spain where I was on holiday. The call took a minute or so to place. "Hi! Where are you?" "You won't believe this but I'm in a public phone box in Murcia, Spain. Where are you?" "I'm on a Royal Navy vessel in the North Sea."

For ex-ministers there are no more red boxes, no cars and no more of those stimulating Civil Service intellects. What I missed most was my driver, Bert Eagle, with whom I spent many happy hours listening to our Buddy Holly tapes in the official Ford Sierra Sapphire (with fuel injection).

Bert Eagle moved on to greater things as a driver for William Hague. He gave me glowing reports - and any man commended by Bert has a lot going for him. By now Bert will have been allocated to a Labour minister but - who knows? - in a few months could be recalled to the Hague colours... as driver to the Leader of the Opposition.

I was lucky. Three years ago I left government at my own request. For those who are wrenched away by the electorate when they still feel they have more to accomplish it can be a terrible blow. But that's democracy and the public are quite right to take a certain grim satisfaction from the sight of Ken Clarke

The public enjoyed seeing Ken Clarke pile his belongings into a hire van

piling his belongings into a hire van. On the Continent and in Latin America, where I now spend much of my time, you remain a minister for ever. My ego is occasionally massaged by diplomats who knew me in my former life addressing me respectfully with the honorific. Yet on balance I think it is right that we should be tipped straight back where we came from...

It was comforting to locate Peter and Virginia Bottomley on their mobile phone on Saturday on their way back from doing the shopping at Tesco's. *Sic transit.*

Mercurially, my decision not to stand in this election saved me from the trauma of losing my Watford seat. You grow fond of your constituency. Not just the party workers with whom you have a personal relationship but with the collective sum, "Watford" - as my children called it - was for 18 years the umbilical cord that linked me to the real world. The feeling of rejection, humiliation even, must be searing.

So spare a thought for those for whom this is the end of the road. Middle-aged, past their best, accustomed to a demanding but zany way of life. A mortgage, an overdraft, children at school... If they have the bug, if they believe politics is the only game in town, for them it will never be glad confident morning again.

For me politics was not the only thing. When I left the government I was lucky enough to be taken up by the Union Bank of Switzerland and so became something in the City. A good deal of what I do is just as interesting as any Cabinet committee, colleagues are all on your side (which makes a change) and it's better paid. I hope all my former colleagues are as fortunate as I feel I have been. But, again, if you are a political addict nothing else will do. The member for Kensington and Chelsea - New Clark - is eloquent testimony to that.

I felt no resentment as I watched the new Labour ministers emerge from Number 10. Donald Dewar is a good man by any yardstick. Gordon Brown, my former pair, is witty, clever, tough, like most of the British public, I am fond of Clare Short and Mo Mowlam. George Robertson is a star - brave and patriotic, he never gave an inch when Militant were on the rampage. I wish them well.

Prime Minister Blair will travel to hell several times and back again in the coming years. And as John Major, his duty done, slips warm beer at some cricket match he may reflect on Pope's celebrated couplet: "And more true joy Marcelus exiled feels than Caesar with the Senate at his heels."

The writer was minister of state at the Foreign Office.



Harriet Harman and Frank Field will shoulder responsibility for the success of the crucial welfare-to-work policy Edward Webb/Emma Cartell



A Cabinet where all seems possible

by Polly Toynbee

How do they look? Remarkably plausible for a bunch of men and women who have never governed before. Too inexperienced, sussed the complacent Tories before they had the smiles wiped off their faces. But the sight of Robin Cook settling into his leather sofa inside the grandiose glory of the Foreign Office brings no shock of surprise: he looks as if he belongs. The Iron Chancellor had never been inside No 11 before, but we find after the long march to power that we know him well already.

Mo Mowlam flew straight to Belfast, so much more at ease there than the last two patrician buffoons who preceded her: at last Northern Ireland has a serious politician on the way up, not a deadbeat missing opportunities. Now all the old clichés of the campaign collapse. No policies, the cynics said. Yet each of these new ministers entering their departments has a strong list of policies to implement, much to do and at once. They are like hungry diners at last sitting down to a long-awaited banquet after too many pre-dinner speeches.

There is no time - they have to tuck in fast. Bids for Bills to be included in the Queen's speech on 14 May all have to be in by this very morning. The Cabinet meets for the first time on Thursday, but even before that its Welfare-to-Work Committee is due to meet at dawn the same day - this is the most crucial plank of their platform, upon which so much hangs, for all their new money is in this one basket.

What's new about this Cabinet? Best is the presence of five women instead of the odd token skirt - though we shall hope for more women in the first Cabinet reshuffle, when the Prime Minister will be freed from party rules. Less attractive is the presence of so many Scots. They occupy a third of the Cabinet, yet only 8 per cent of the population live in Scotland. Broadcasting lore has it that the Scots accent is the best-loved - educated yet non-metropolitan - but during a protracted esoteric devolution debate, the accent may start to grate on English ears. It will be a constant reminder of the West Lothian question - the injustice of Scots MPs governing England but not vice versa, unmitigated by Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar's well-deserved esteem.

Otherwise, this Cabinet represents a fine balancing act, most of the right faces in the right places. Michael Meacher was the main faller: an affable left-wing lightweight, he never recovered from his absurd court-room failure to prove his working-class credentials. As for Clare Short, there

would have been a national outcry if this warmest and most human of politicians had been punished for the very qualities that make her loved.

For the rest, it is a cleverly crafted Cabinet of people who mainly know their subjects well already. Some that didn't have been moved. What a sigh of relief that Jack Cunningham has been banished to Agriculture, that graveyard of political hopes. At Heritage they trembled at his self-confessed philistinism: safer by far with the gumboots than the galleries. His cynical indifference to the future of media ownership and his dismal stewardship of opposition to the Broadcasting Act last year made him unfit for the battles to come.

Can we hope that Chris Smith at Heritage will be resolute in stemming the galloping ambitions of Rupert Murdoch? The Ofcom regulator whose

'There would have been an outcry if Clare Short had been punished for the very qualities that make her loved'

job it is to ensure a level playing field in digital broadcasting is already under sinister attack in the Murdoch press. Smith has the honesty, let us hope he has the power to resist any favours expected for The Sun's comical support through the election.

Old bluster Frank Dobson's elevation to Health was a clever move. A Bill to modify the internal market in the NHS will be in the Queen's speech, but it will embody no radical change, merely amending GP fund-holding and reducing the wasteful annual contractual round of bids of paper flying to and fro. However, the departing Chancellor of the Exchequer has left him an elephant trap in the NHS budget, and he will have to fight hard for real new money to plug the gaping hole.

Dobson's toughest job is to stop the health workers asking for too much, too soon. However, Union leader Rodney Bickerstaffe is a changed man, committed to holding back his low-paid members' justifiable pent-up demands after years of pay freezes. The first public workers to try Blair's strength can expect a hammering - and wisely, Bickerstaffe doesn't want his members beaten to a pulp.

At the end of their term, how will this Cabinet

judge their collective success? One of the best measures will be the size of the social security budget. The spiralling £90bn total they have inherited is not an indicator of state generosity but of state failure and the destructive force of unemployment. It will not be down to Harriet Harman and Frank Field alone to reduce it, but much of the success of welfare-to-work falls to them.

Now the bad-mouthing of Harriet Harman has become a kind of knee-jerk silly-woman bashing. Here's a sample of what she's in for from yesterday's *Sunday Telegraph*: "Wide-eyed, vacuous, Labour's Virginia Bottomley... She'll need minding. Major internal tensions with highly complex social security brief - and our new minister looking over her shoulder at Frank Field as her No 2."

This is all tosh but it doesn't come only from the right, who for some bizarre reason regard Field as one of theirs. Just because she's good-looking: that does not make her a Virginia Bottomley. For one thing, her crisis over her son's grammar school place toughened her up overnight and she will never suffer from Bottomley's fatally famous need to be loved. For another, she's no airhead, and she knows her headish brief in remarkable detail.

Nor, I predict, will there be friction between her and Frank Field, though the best game in town will be inventing it. His reputation as a loner and a maverick comes from the olden days of his valiant struggle with the lunatic left, striving to get them to see sense about issues such as benefit fraud. True, he carries potentially awkward baggage in his free-thinking writings on welfare - all those seminars at the Institute of Economic Affairs. Many of his ideas are definitely not government policy. He will have to abandon (as an article he wrote yesterday suggests he already has) his plans for compulsory contributions to a new pensions system. It is not practical politics, as it would amount to a swinging £3bn tax increase. Instead, Harman's plan to entice all employees into investing in extra state-approved pensions contributions on a voluntary basis will be tried first.

Over the weekend the excitement of victory has rapidly given way to the thrill of starting to pull on the levers of government. Will they work? Can these things be done? Right now, 18 years of frustration is being released in a great tidal wave of belief that everything can and will change. As they look at themselves assembled round the Cabinet table for the first time this week, anything will seem possible. As we look at them now, eager, serious and honest, we can only wonder we tolerated the decadence of the others for so long.

Honest John's new job starts here...



Myles Kingston

I am told by a normally reliable source that the election is over and that we are now entering a new era in British public life, one which will irrevocably change the face of British politics, which is what people always say when we have a change of government.

But it will mean a very real change of life for at least one man, and so, while everyone else was beating a path to 10 Downing Street for a glimpse of the newly sanctified Tony Blair coming out on the balcony to bless the crowds, I was heading the other way, to the residence of the newly unemployed John Major, who has suddenly been cast on the labour market in his fifties, made redundant with no obvious skills and little realistic chance of being re-employed.

Would he, I inquired, consider doing a little light journalism and writing the occasional column for me with his thoughts on the world today?

He would be absolutely delighted, he replied, as it would give him a chance to set the record straight.

Would he like to start straight away, I further inquired, by which I meant today?

Why, he delicately asked, so soon?

Because, I explained, I was hoping to get away over the holiday weekend, and needed someone to fill in who had time on their hands and wanted a bit of ready cash.

I am your man, came the reply.

Here, accordingly, is today's guest columnist, Mr John Major.

Thank you.

"Well," (writes John Major) "as I put my feet up and pack away the famous soap box, which will not be needed again in my lifetime, I finally have a few moments in which to look back at a feverish and frantic election campaign, at the end of which the British public exercised their inalienable right to go into the ballot box and make a fool of themselves."

"Am I being bitter? Not at all. I am merely letting you see a glimpse of that sense of humour for which I am so famous, and yet which nobody has ever heard an example of. This was one of the great successes of our campaign, the constant hammering home of our central message - that although John Major seems a dull dog, he is in fact, a decent, honest bloke with a great sense of humour. I

think this got through to the public."

"Unfortunately, it was the only thing that did get through to the public."

"We tried everything else. We tried tarring the Labour Party with their connection with the big, bad trade unions. Unfortunately, few voters were old enough to clearly remember a time when unions were either big or bad, and I blame Margaret fairly and squarely for that."

"We tried pointing to our economic success. 'Look, Britain's booming!', we said. 'Don't let Labour blow it.' Unfortunately, the papers kept printing league tables showing we were lying about 11th in the EU, and that we weren't booming at all."

"I also tried to alert people to the possible break-up of the Union. Unfortunately I now realise that people were confused by this. Sometimes I was saying bad things about the unions and sometimes good things about the Union."

"However, there were very many bright spots in the election. The defeat of Michael Portillo, for one. The sight of David Mellor losing his rag in his hour of ignominy. What a very unappealing character he is, between you and me. Even better, the humiliation of Norman Lamont, who nearly bankrupted the country on Black Wednesday, and the fall of William Waldegrave, whom I repeatedly asked to resign after the Scott report and who never answered any of my memos. Well done, Bristol West!"

"And now we come to the battle for the leadership of the Tory party. Well, not quite as much of a battle as it might have been, as there are only about 160 people left."

"The last time I stepped down from the job, I stood for election again and got it! Why should I not do it again? Perhaps I will have more to say about this in my next guest column."

"Thank you, sir. Great privilege."

The Cutting Edge

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V&A

The National Museum of Art and Design

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Charles Arthur, science editor

There's heat under them thar feet

Deep underneath the streets of Manhattan, deeper even than the sewers where the alligators lurk, something is stirring. An uptown apartment block being built on 64th Street is to have two holes, each 6in in diameter, sunk 1,500ft below the surface. That is a depth greater than the Canary Wharf tower in London is high, more than the 1,370ft of New York's own World Trade Towers.

The holes are being bored in order to tap the rocks below New York as a source of geothermal energy. Water will be pumped down one hole and drawn from the other. The resulting machine should be a perfect heat exchanger. The apartment building would be cooled in summer, warmed in winter. An external power source using a small amount of electricity will be needed

to power the heat pumps. But in return rooms could be cooled and warmed at lib.

No fussy, noisy and expensive air-conditioning, no bulky boilers, none of those huge whirling fans that seem to be obligatory on New York rooftops. The economics of the project look good, too. The extra cost of the drilling (\$100,000) and pumps should be paid for within a few years by the savings that will come from not dispensing with conventional systems. Overall there will be less electricity consumed - which means less greenhouse gas, less global warming.

Geothermal energy is catching on in the United States, not in a dramatic way perhaps, but enough. Over the next five years the Americans are set to build as many as 400,000 geothermal systems; projects already

running produce some 2,000 megawatts of power.

All of which prompts an obvious question: why aren't we trying similar schemes here in Britain? After all, geothermal power would be far less visible than wind farms (those semaphoring white giants that many detest). Geothermal power needs a lower technology level than solar panels (it's just pumps and holes). It doesn't need any long-distance transfer - you dig the hole where you need the cooling.

In fact geothermal energy systems have been investigated in the United Kingdom, where they are known by the vaguely disparaging term of "hot dry rocks" or HDRs. The energy potential is large - perhaps 10 per cent of the UK's electricity requirement could be provided by HDR systems. However, there are only three such

projects up and running at present - in Cleethorpes, Southampton and Penryn. Development has been slow because the Department of Trade and Industry (which absorbed the Department of Energy) has never looked favourably on renewable energy.

"Everyone thought I was nuts," said John Barnes, who is sinking the two holes in New York. But it's really everyone else who, if not nuts, is missing a great chance.

There is an enormous reservoir of energy sitting there, leftover like a huge storage radiator from the time when the Earth coalesced from dust. Instead of reaching under our feet we use fuels that in the end are going to cost far, far more.

obituaries / gazette

Hughie Green

Tall, talented, handsome yet homespun; confident, creative, comical and corny; defiant, determined, beloved and even brave — this was Hughie Green, "and I mean that most sincerely, folks, I really do!"

I borrow without blushing one of his many catch-phrases coined down the years. Remember "It's make-your-mind-up-time!"... "Let's take a look at the Clapometer!"... "This is your show, folks, and I do mean you!"... "And for little Miss Bonnie Langford, Opportunity Knocks!" To get full value from the latter, you need to shout in your broadest transatlantic accent, "Arp-er-toon-ity Marks-er!" And that was, unusually for those days, not entirely faked. For, with Hughie Green, there was always a strong Canadian connection.

Green, the first home-grown host of that breed of broadcast series known as audience participation shows, and father of the countless talented teenagers who infest our daytime and late-night cables today, had fishy beginnings: his father was known as Canada's Fish-monger General, Hugh Green, a staunch Scotsman, emigrated to Canada in 1907, but returned to London in 1917, where Hugh Jr was born in 1920.

Showbiz surrounded the boy from as early as he could remember. Every weekend, his father invited round the top stars from the local theatres, and impromptu sing-songs ensued, starting Evelyn Laye, perhaps, or Jack Buchanan who might throw in a bit of a tap dance.

One of these regulars would have a great effect on the life of the young Hughie. This was the eccentric comedian Harry Tate, who would twiddle his false walrus moustache at the boy as he shouted his trademark, "Goodbye-ee!" Tate became the boy's godfather and took him on a stage for the first time in his life when he was seven years old. Not that the audience at the London Coliseum were any the wiser. Inside Tate's comedy aeroplane lay young Green, cranking the propeller. Thus were born, in one fell swoop, Hughie Green's twin loves, which would last his lifetime: the stage and flying.

In 1927 came the first contact with Canada. The family took a holiday trip and Hughie sang a song in the ship's concert wearing a kilt provided by his father. Unfortunately the elastic top was a trifle loose. The song was called "The Old Lady in the Market Street Car": what happened to the kilt is not recorded.

Home again in Golders Green, Hughie, now 11, did a turn at the local cinema's talent competition, and then with some chums took his first step towards destiny. He put on his own show. Seeing that the Royal National Hospital was appealing for £50,000, he hired the Hoop Lane Hall for five shillings and with a gang of Golders Green pals, including one billed as "Baby Sunshine", they staged two hours of variety, at the end of which he was proud to present the hospital with a cheque for £4.3s. Inspired by this success, Green did it all again at the slightly more up-market St Albans Church Hall (hiring charge 1 guinea), and turned in a total of £12.6s.2d.

The Harry Tate influence came again in 1931, when the 11-year-old Green made his professional debut at the Garrick Theatre. It was in an old-time music hall bill chaired by the veteran comedian Charles Austin. Sticking on a spare Harry Tate moustache which he always carried, Green sang "Gilbert The Filbert" as Tate, concluding with the classic "Goodbye-ee!"

Meanwhile the all-kid shows continued in local halls, finally coming to the attention of the BBC. Bryan Michie, the first talent-spotter for Saturday night's top programme, *In Town Tonight*, came secretly to see the show and recommended that Green & Gang be given a go on the radio.

It was 1933. Green was 13, and his signature tune was "The Wearing O' The Green". Three minutes on Saturday night radio and by Monday he was a star, Eric Maschwitz, head of variety, and John Watt, chief producer, came up with a contract and the young impresario and his equally young cast were wireless stars — for three 15-minute programmes. Not too many of these talented gangsters made it to the top like their boy boss, but mention may be made of Lauri Lupino Lane, who certainly did, as did young Connie Wood, once she had changed her name to Kathy Kay and met Billy Cotton and his band.

In 1934, the newish field of cine-variety gave the Gang a chance and they toured the Paramount Cinema circuit starting off at the Brixton Astoria and finishing at the Alhambra, Leicester Square. Between shows, good old Harry Tate came to the rescue and cast Hughie as his cheeky office boy in a stage sketch which was put on film by the Pathéphone

Weekly. A screen test made for *Little Lord Fauntleroy* failed, but Gaumont-British cast him in support of their new child star, Nova Pilbeam, in their film *Little Friend* (1934).

Never quite making his mark as a film star, Green still did better than many. He topped the billing in *Midshipman Easy* (1935), directed by the beginner Carol Reed at Ealing Studios, from the famous boys' adventure novel by Captain Marryat. Jack Easy was Hughie Green, of course, and the Spanish maiden he saves from bandits was the young Margaret Lockwood. In the role of Mr Biggs, the merry old mate, was none other than Harry Tate.

Green did a guest star spot in *Radio Pirates* (1935) along with Teddy Brown, the overweight xylophonist. This somewhat premature account of a pirate radio station set up to oppose the BBC, showed Green in his solo act as an impressionist. He would repeat this in the 1939 film *Music Hall Parade*, when his repertoire, always fast and vast, included Lionel Barrymore, Nellie Wallace, Jack Buchanan, Claude Dampier, Charles Laughton, Robertson Hare, Vic Oliver and, yes, Harry Tate.

His partnership with Margaret Lockwood continued in *Melody and Romance* (1937), which climaxed excitingly with Green saving the swooning star from the Crystal Palace fire. All exciting stuff, but no more films came along until 1939 when a very small quota company built *Down Our Alley* around his personality, later reissuing the film under the title of *Gang Show*, much to the irritation of the Boy Scout showman-in-chief, Ralph Reader.

Green's flying career took off when he was 19. He flew solo at Doncaster just three months before the declaration of the Second World War. Volunteering immediately he was rejected by the RAF. He broke up his Gang and went to Canada with his father. He became an AC2 in the Royal Canadian Air Force, and soon rose to be Sergeant Instructor for the Link Trainers.

Given special leave to act on Broadway in the propaganda play *Golden Wings*, he opened on the day before Pearl Harbor. Returning immediately to Ontario, he joined Ferry Command and spent the rest of the war flying Catalinas from Carolina to Russia, a job made even more difficult by the Russians who insisted on tight formation-flying at all times.



'Opportunity Knocks': Green (centre) at his last show, 1978, with some of his discoveries. From left: Freddie Davies, Lena Zavaroni, Frank Carson (above), Green, Mary Hopkin, Lena Dawson

After the war, a return to entertainment seemed difficult. He made a try in 1945 on Canadian Radio, but the best thing about the *Hughie Green Comedy Show* was an early encounter with a supporting cast consisting of the young Bernard Braden and Barbara Kelly. After a couple of small film roles, *If Winter Comes* (1947) in Hollywood and *Paper Orchid* in England (1948), he put up the idea for a new type of amateur talent show to BBC radio.

This was given a try by go-ahead young producer, Dennis Main Wilson, and from 18 February 1949 *Opportunity Knocks* was on the air, starting "Your Master of Opportunities, Hughie Green!" Assisted by a small part film actor, Pat McGrath, and introducing big-time film star Sheila Sim as the show's first star talent spotter, the series got off to a fine start by creating at least two stars-to-be, Jean Bayless and Louise Trull. In time, would come forth such luminaries as Louise Gainsborough, The Kordkies, The Gaunt Brothers, and a trumpet impersonator called Spike Milligan. Green was equally frank about his rejects, who included the

singing star Alma Cogan, and Tony Hancock.

The difference between "Opportunity Knocks" as it came to be called, and its pre-war rival, Carroll Lewis's *Discoveries*, was that each new personality was introduced by his or her independent discoverer, someone who thought they were worth giving a chance. By the end of the first series, Green and his producer had travelled 20,000 miles, auditioned 4,000 acts, and broadcast 165 of them.

From 1950, the show transferred to Radio Luxembourg, sponsored by Horlicks. Tomorrow's stars were accompanied by Cyril Stapleton and his Orchestra and winners, voted for by listeners, were rewarded with a professional booking on *A Date with Steve Race*, sponsored perhaps unfortunately by Airwick Deodorant.

Green was given a new appellation, "Mirth Master", for a second series he devised for commercial radio. This was *Double Your Money*, which began on Luxembourg on 5 October 1954. The first winners were newlyweds, Mr and Mrs Smith, who worked their way through the six questions asked

them until they hit the top cash money prize of no less than £32. This time the sponsor was Lucozade.

The arrival of Independent Television was manna from heaven for Green, his intimate, confident style coming straight through the screen into your face in his beaming, winking close-ups that still managed to embrace the invisible studio audience, who screamed with a delight not too many decibels down from the uproar we are treated to today. *Double Your Money* was first on the independent air on 26 September 1955. Prizes still started at £1 and worked their way up to £32, but the big addition was the Treasure Trail; this topped off at no less than £1,024, an unheard-of sum in British give-away shows.

To compete, one had to return week by week, doubling up the money prize each time. Although many would win, the most famous did not. This was Plantagenet Somerset Fry whose chosen subject was history. He quit at £512, much to the rage of the audience, not to mention his own when he discovered he could have answered the £1,024 question correctly!

The following year Green brought *Opportunity Knocks* to ITV starting 13 June. This time there was a top cash prize of £400 or a trip to New York. A visual "Clapometer" measured audience applause, but the winner was decided by a viewers' vote. Many national stars were born from this long-running series, including over the years Les Dawson, Russ Abbot, Freddie Starr, Frank Carson, Little and Large, Tom O'Connor and Bonnie Langford. The show was revived in 1964, and again in 1989. This time, the BBC bought the format and rechristened it *Bob Says Opportunity Knocks*, starring a certain Mr Monkhouse.

This was a half-hearted "all is forgiven, but not quite" from Green's long-standing opposition. In 1950, Green, the man with as much of an ego as he had a right to, dared to take the great corporation to court. He was convinced that after the initial success of his *Opportunity Knocks*, corruption had prevented his contract from being renewed, in favour of Carroll Lewis and his *Discoveries*. It took five years to get to court, but even with

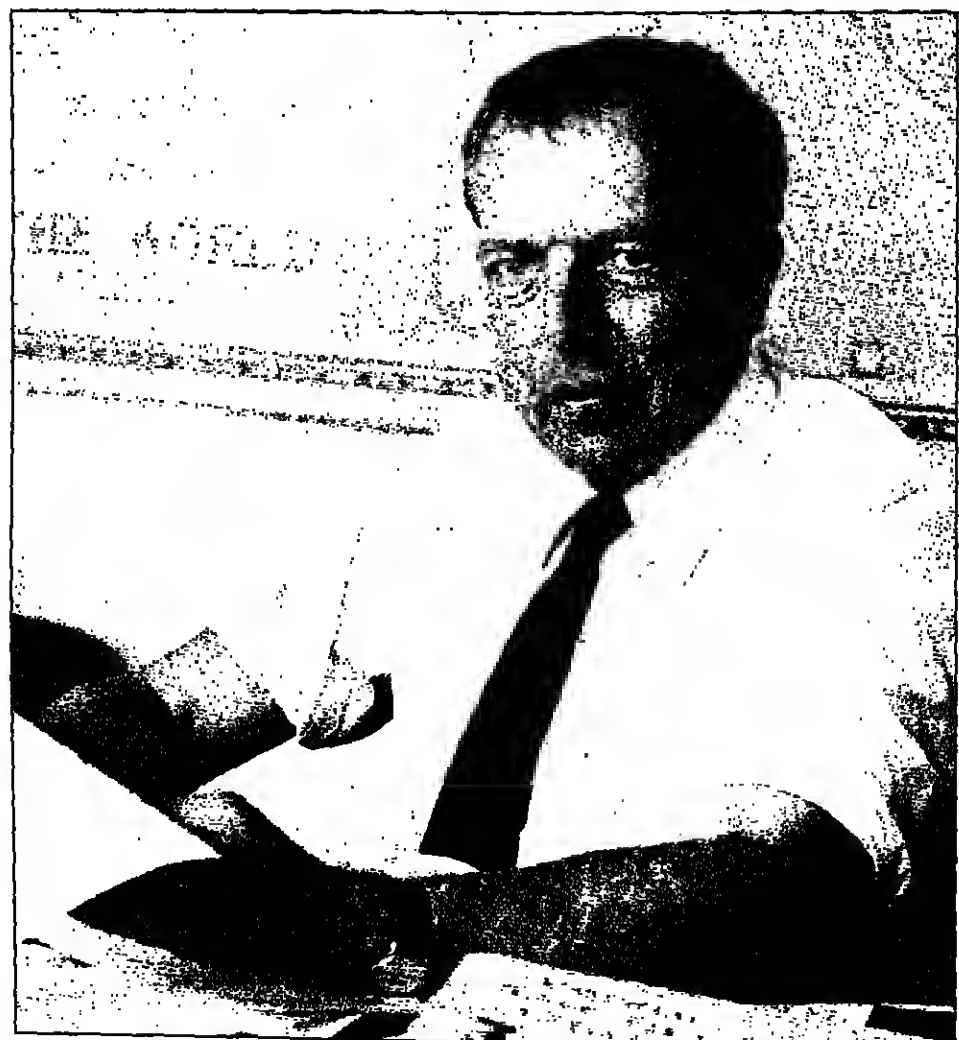
Lord Hailsham in his defence he lost. Green was bankrupted by the costs. He went back to flying and eventually, thanks to the independent radio and television companies, shot back to the top of the British entertainment tree.

But the loss of his bitter BBC battle was not a lesson. He remained a determined and independent man. In 1978, he started another big legal battle against certain overseas television companies swiping his *Opportunity Knocks* format without acknowledgement or payment of copyrights. It took eleven years, and he lost; not even his Clapometer was considered his own property. Tragic? Perhaps, but not to Hughie Green. To him it was just a part of his life. As he wrote at the end of his 1965 autobiography, *Opportunity Knocked*: "Just remember. I'm only an actor." I think he was much, much more — and I mean it most sincerely.

Dennis Gifford

Hugh Green, actor and broadcaster: born London 2 February 1920; married Claire Wilson (one son, one daughter); died London 4 May 1997.

Sir John Junor



Junor in 1968: a gift for homespun invective, which he developed into an art form. Photograph: UPP

By the 1980s John Junor was possibly the best-known Scotsman in England, writing a famous column in the newspaper he edited from 1954 to 1986, the *Beaverbrookian Sunday Express*.

It was a column that had millions of readers nodding their heads wisely and telling themselves that you had to hand it to old Junor — he knew how to sock it to them. He socked it to social workers and homosexuals, to intellectuals, to pompous old twits and various other groups that the average Englishman longs to abuse but lacks the facility with words, not to mention the necessary bad taste, to do the job properly. He socked it to liberal-minded members of the Royal Family. As for politicians, he regarded Harold Macmillan as a posuer ("as phony as a two-dollar bill") and Harold Wilson as spineless ("I doubted whether between his backside and his backside there was anything but his braces"). He adored Margaret Thatcher.

Junor's father came from the Highlands, but Junor himself was born in Glasgow, in a tenement building in Maryhill. Years later, when he wanted to delight his readers with an idealised community with all the homely Scottish virtues, he picked not only Glasgow but on the town of Auchtermuchty, which sounds fictional but is in fact an undistinguished little place in Fife. Junor liked to call in there when he went north

from Fleet Street to play golf — Auchtermuchty is conveniently on the road to St Andrews. The Auchtermuchty of Junor's sabbath imagination warmed the heart of every *Sunday Express* reader. It was a place where the lassies were pretty, the lads were lusty, and there was short shrift for "woofers and poofters". No man in Auchtermuchty ate quiche.

Junor's early ambitions leant more towards politics than journalism. At Glasgow University he joined the Liberal Party and became president of the University Liberal Club. In 1939, he found himself picked for the kind of mission most of us think of as taking place in fiction. He was signed on, at the time not inconsiderable salary of £4 a week, by the fabulously rich and highly personable Lady Glen-Coats, a Liberal activist, as her private secretary, to go on a fact-finding tour of Hitler's Germany. The couple were only just able to get a train out of Germany before the Second World War started on 3 September. Later, Junor was to stand unsuccessfully three times for Parliament in the Liberal interest.

Junor came to the notice of the newspaper magnate Lord Beaverbrook soon after the war, the latter stages of which Junor spent editing the Fleet Air Arm's magazine, *Flight Deck*. By 1948 he was working as a reporter on Beaverbrook's *Daily Express*. "I discovered

early on that I would not have made a very good hard news reporter," he said, but he had the knack of writing about political personalities and was moved on within months to writing the "Cross-Bencher" column in the *Sunday Express*.

The column set standards for malicious political gossip and Junor soon joined the select club of Beaverbrook cronies, liable to be called in to make up dinner parties or simply to provide or listen to ideas. He was even provided with a house on the Beaverbrook estate. In 1951, Junor was promoted to assistant editor and chief leader writer of the *Daily Express*, and after a brief stint as editor of the *London Evening Standard*, he came editor of the *Sunday Express* in 1954.

He edited the paper for a long time before he took over the column which made him his own most celebrated contributor. He started writing it, as it happens, at almost precisely the time that the Tory party chose Margaret Thatcher as its leader. The initiative for the first meeting between them came not from him, but from her, or at least from her entourage.

Her public relations adviser, Gordon Rees, arranged a lunch with Junor at the Boulton restaurant. Junor regarded himself as a connoisseur of the Tory politicians at the time, but at the initial lunch he did not find the future Prime Minister over-impressive: in

Auchtermuchty they preferred their politicians to be male. But it was not long before the Thatcher team, seeking to woo Junor, found they were pushing at an open door. It had come to him as a blinding light that what Auchtermuchty really wanted in the hour of the nation's need was the no-nonsense approach of a woman, a woman who believed in good house-keeping, a grocer's daughter who knew how many beans made five.

It takes one to know one; and in Margaret Thatcher Junor recognised one of his own kind. At last the old Etonians and the effete Southerners who had run the country for so long were about to get their come-uppance. He was soon coming up with suggestions as how to purge the old Conservative Party.

The most characteristic setting for the mature Junor was his favourite table at either the Boulton or the Savoy, where he would entertain leading politicians. There he picked up and passed on gossip, and received whatever messages the politicians were anxious to convey to the greater public. He liked to think his conversation had a catalytic effect on policy-making at the top. Yet one suspects that these were the sort of occasions where each participant was convinced he was using the other.

Junor was an ill-natured populist with a taste for common-or-garden abuse, although he

could be generous in his summing-up of some politicians. "Of all the people around Mrs Thatcher," he wrote in 1990, "I have not the slightest doubt which one, in a perfect world, I would choose as her successor. Geoffrey Howe." But Junor never traded on his judgement. It was his gift for homespun invective, which he developed into an art form, which seemed particularly appropriate to the Thatcherite years.

The John Junor brand of rudeness was one of the more notable characteristics of public life in the Eighties; in the Nineties, no longer editor of the *Sunday Express*, he moved his column to the *Mail on Sunday*, a pulp that he shared with Julie Burchill. It was the Old next to the New Testament. Junor, a heavy, thick-set man of a folksy appearance, might have had his finger on the nation's pulse, but he also got on its nerves.

Julian Critchley

John Donald Brown Junor, journalist: born Glasgow 15 January 1919; Assistant Editor, *Daily Express* 1951-53; Deputy Editor, *Evening Standard* 1953-54; Editor, *Sunday Express* 1954-56; Columnist 1973-89; Director, *Beaverbrook* (later *Express*) Newspapers 1960-86; Kt 1980; Columnist, *Mail on Sunday* 1990-97; author of *The Best of JJ 1981*; Listening for a Midnight Tramp 1990; married 1942 Pamela Welsh (one son, one daughter); died 3 May 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

IN MEMORIAM

DOWNIE: Freda, died 5 May 1993.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS may be telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, Horse No. 1 Company Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Irish Guards.

Birthdays

Sir Michael Angus, chairman, Whitebread, 67; Mr Vivian Anthony, secretary, Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, 59; Mr Graham Clinton, cricketer, 44; Mrs Elizabeth Conran, curator, the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, 55; Sir Alan Donald, former diplomat, 66; Miss Alice Faye, actress and singer, 82; Sir Charles Fletcher-Cooke QC, former MP, 83; Mrs Joanna Foster, director, BT Forum, 58; Sir Victor Gaskin, former Australian High Commissioner, 63; General Sir Charles Harrington, 87; Sir Brian Hayes, former senior civil servant, 68; Mr Vernon Mann, journalist, 52; Mr Michael Palin, comedian and actor, 54; Lady Plowden, former chairman, IBA, 87; Mr Barry Reed, chairman, Austin Reed Group, 60; Mr Roger Rees, actor and playwright, 53; Mr James Stevens, composer, 67; Miss Dilly Watling, actress, 51; Mr Jonathan Weeks, managing

director, Woolworth, 59; The Right Rev Gordon Wheeler, Roman Catholic Bishop Emeritus of Leeds, 87; Mr John Whitaker, cricketer, 35; Professor Sir Gannor Williams, historian, and former chairman, Ancient Monuments Board (Wales), 77; Miss Tammy Wynette, singer, 55; Mr Gerard Young, former Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, 87.

Anniversaries

Births: Rupert, King of Germany, 1352; Louis-Christophe François Hachette, bookseller and publisher, 1800; Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, philosopher, 1813; Heinrich Karl Marx, author and socialist, 1818; Deaths: Napoleon I (Napoleon Bonaparte), Emperor of France, 1821; William Friese-Greene (William Green), cinematographer, 1921. On this day: St Helena was occupied by Captain John Dutton of the East India Company, 1689; the first train robbery in the United States

took place near North Bend, Ohio, 1865; excavation of the Corinth Canal in Greece began, 1882; Amy Johnson began a solo flight to Australia, 1930. Today is the Feast Day of St Angelo, St Avertinus, St Hilary of Arles, St Hilary of Calcutta, St John Hail, St Jutta and St Maurinus.

Appointments

Mr Colin Munro, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Croatia. Mr Michael William Rapinot, to be a full-time legal member of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal. Mr Henry Brock Threlkova, Mrs Emma Servais Martinus and Mr Alister Laird McGee, to be full-time Immigration Adjudicators, sitting in Greater London. Professor George Alberti, to be President of the Royal College of Physicians. Sir Idris Pearce and Lord Satchell, to be members of the Council of the Royal College of Art.

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Law Reports*.

Extradition
Re Chetty; QBD Div Ct (Pill LJ, Asplin J) 30 April 1997.

A person seeking to apply under s 16 of the Extradition Act 1989 was not required to give notice to the Home Secretary of his intention prior to the expiry of the one month period from the date that the s 12 warrant had been issued. It was not open to applicants to dress up the statutory claim under s 16 as an application for a writ of habeas corpus in order to improve their procedural position. Section 16 merely conferred the detainee with a right

CASE SUMMARIES

5 May 1997

to apply to the court, and did not constitute a challenge to the lawfulness of the decision.

The applicants in person: *Rabinder Singh (Treasury Solicitor) for the Home Secretary; Julian Knowles for the Government of Canada.*

Evidence

R v Waters; CA Cr Div (Kennedy LJ, Harrison J, Nelson J) 18 February 1997.

Where a witness started to give relevant evidence but was then unable to continue apparently through fear, the trial judge was correct in admitting in evidence the witness's earlier statement pur-

suant to s 23(1) and (3)(b) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988, because such further relevant evidence, which the witness was expected to, but did not, give came within the provisions of s 23.

Timothy Parkin (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the appellant, Paul Batty QC (who did not appear at the trial), Beatrice Bolton, (CPS) for the Crown.

Tax

R v Inland Revenue Comrs, ex parte Ulster Bank Ltd; CA (Simon Brown LJ, Morritt LJ, Sir Brian Neill) 8 May 1997.

The Revenue might require


production of categories of documents as well as particular documents in a notice pursuant to s 20 of the Taxes Management Act 1970 issued to a bank in connection with investigations into the tax affairs of its customers. Further, it would be premature for the court to review a "precursor" notice to the effect that the inspector intended to seek the consent of a special commissioner under s 20(7) to serve such a notice. A challenge could be mounted only if and when consent had been given by a special commissioner, and a notice had been issued. *David Goldberg QC and George Leggan QC (Travers Smith British-White) for the bank; Timothy Brennan (Inland Revenue Solicitor).*

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flowering
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stage. Why?

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Morgan
Freeman:
good actor,
bad movie

POP

Prefab
Sprout: on
song again

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO

EVENTS

Catch this

Angling: Cast your net far and wide – in the beautiful setting of Chatsworth House, the Duke of Devonshire's stately home. The Angling Fair is one of the biggest in the UK and takes place this weekend. For children there's a competition to lift pretend fish out of the canal, for others a demonstration by Jerry Siem, the fly-casting double for Robert Redford in *A River Runs Through It*. Sat, Sun 8am-5pm £8, accomp child free. 01263 711736.

Gala: Big names perform live in a gala concert at the Manchester Opera House celebrating the Prince's Trust's 21st birthday: The Spice Girls, Gary Barlow, Julian Clary, Stephen Fry and Jennifer Aniston from *Friends*. To be shown on ITV on 26 May 8pm. The Cirque de Soleil should be particularly eye-catching. 7.30pm £50-£100/£175 inc dinner. 0171-543 1389.

Environment Week: More than one million people take to the fields, riverbanks and urban wastelands from Saturday to try to improve their local surroundings, ending on the 18th. The Sparkhill Green Residents Association is planting a wildflower garden on derelict land in Birmingham to attract butterflies while Fell Dyke Primary School in Wrekenton, Gateshead plans to extend a wooded area, and put in a wildlife pond. 0171-976 2022.

MUSIC

Last chance at the opera

Opera: Three last chances at the Royal Opera House: *Otello*, conducted by Myung-Whun Chung with Kallen Esperian as Desdemona (5th 7.30pm, £27-£125). *L'elisir d'amore*, with the wonderful Angela Gheorghiu but also young British soprano Deborah York (9th 7.30pm returns only, in person); and for maybe the last time ever in London, Luciano Pavarotti in a one-off recital this Sunday, accompanied by pianist and conductor Leone Magiera, performing Puccini arias and sacred liturgy by Schubert. (2pm returns only, in person). 0171-304 4000.

Classical: German violinist Anne-Sophie Mutter, whose marketability obscures a wonderful musical talent, performs Beethoven's Violin Concerto at the Barbican Hall, London on Tuesday. The programme also has the premiere of a work by Piers Hellewell, *Do Not Disturb*, to be sung by the Finchley Children's Music Group. Plus Brahms's Symphony No 1. This is the first in a series of four concerts featuring Hellewell's work; the second is the following night, and then the pianist Alfred Brendel performs on the 21st and 22nd. Sir Colin Davis conducts in all. 7.30pm £10-£30 standby £8/£5.50. 0171-638 8891.

Pop: More support for the Hillsborough Family Support Group: The Manic Street Preachers, Dodgy, the Fabulous Space and the Lightning Seeds in concert at Anfield, Liverpool. Proceeds to the Group. £20. 4pm. 0800 1388844.

THE ARTS

Czech charmer

Film: The Oscar-winner for best foreign film, *Kolya*, opens on Friday after massive successes at the Czech box office. "Funny, warm-hearted and improbably unsentimental, with an astonishingly good performance by young Andrej Chalonin," says our critic. Curzon, Mayfair and selected cinemas.

Theatre: Terrence McNally's *Masterclass* is based on the life and diva-teachings of Maria Callas. It also stars Patil LuPone, the understudy for the part of Callas when the show was on Broadway. It won a Tony for Best Play last year. Opening tomorrow, the whole run (until 19 July) is going to sell out and you need to get tickets quickly. Tue-Sat 8pm, mats Wed/Sat 3pm £10-£30 (+£1 credit card) 0171-494 5040.

Dance: The queen of British dance, Siobhan Davies performs a double bill revival on Friday of an old success, *White Man Sleeps*, inspired by African rhythms, and a new work, *Bank*, set to harmonica and percussion. Tour starts at Blackpool Grand Theatre (Fri, Sat 8pm £9-£11 conc £7. 01253 28372).

Visual Arts: A major exhibition, *A Quality of Light*, opens on Saturday at one of the country's most prolific and creative areas in the visual arts, the Penwith peninsula in Cornwall, with works by 14 artists, including Bridget Riley and Victor Gribppo from Buenos Aires. At the Tate Gallery, St Ives (£3.50/£2 concs Mon-Sat 11am-7pm, Sun 11am-5pm). Newlyn Art Gallery (Mon-Sat 11am-5pm) – both end 27 July. More out-of-the-way venues include Botallack (Tue-Sun 11am-5pm), the railway station, and churches around the region (non-gallery venues end 27 July). 01736 796543.

Mime: Marcel Marceau, the world's greatest mime artist, makes a one-off, one-man appearance at the Festival Hall on Saturday, celebrating 50 years of his "BIP" alter-ego who sniffs flowers and chases



butterflies, but also deals in deeper, world-weary matters. 7.30pm £10-£25. 0171 960 4201.

SPORT AND LEISURE

Cannes do

Film/Sport: In the South of France this week two major money-spinning activities have their annual shows of glitz and pits. The Cannes Film Festival celebrates its 50th birthday, which many believe has overshadowed the actual content. Opened by Luc Besson's mega-budget *The Fifth Element*, starring Bruce Willis, on Wednesday at 7.15pm, the possible Palme d'Or prize winners, and films to watch out for in the future, are the "extremely talented" *Screen International* director Matthieu (La Haine) Kassovitz's *Assassins*, Miramax's latest thing, *Welcome Sarajevo* by Michael Winterbottom (Jude) and Atom (Erolica) Egoyan's *The Secret Hereafter*, which is probably the winner as the festival's chief selector has claimed it to be the best thing he's seen all year. All aim to follow in the footsteps of Mike Leigh's *Secrets & Lies* last year. The Festival is followed by the Monaco Grand Prix next Sunday. What price victory for Britain's Eddie Irvine? His playboy image and driving style fit Monaco perfectly. ITV Sun 1.15pm, highlights 11pm

Fashion: You can't get in, but if you wander past 194-195 Sloane Street, west London on Wednesday around 6.30pm, you may be able to catch sight of the likes of Joan Collins, William and Susan Boyd, Dominic Lawson and Andrew Neil for the opening of the new Escada store, "Couture and Elements".

Money: Billionaire philanthropist George Soros speaks at Chatham House, the Royal Institute for International Affairs on Sunday and may further outline theories recently expounded in the article "The Capitalist Threat" in *Atlantic Monthly* which many Tories mistakenly described as a sudden "conversion" to left-leaning ideology.

Research: James Autenast

I was in the Sixties. The sun shone in the summertime, the snow fell at Christmas and forget-me-nots flowered on my birthday in the forget-me-not bed in our garden. One day this man phoned to ask whether I would do a pilot for a quiz show he had devised for BBC Radio.

I said yes. We are hoping for 13," said the man, 13 being the number of weeks for which a successful series is scheduled. This was money to be reckoned with: 12 guineas per recording it was, plus extra for any repeat and a bit more if Bush House took it to broadcast to the world.

First came the pilot: a session which would be carefully edited and played to the controller of the network. What the big man said went. He said "go".

We recorded the half-hour series and it was broadcast to modest acclaim. *Just a Minute* was born. "What do you think?" we asked each other when it was over, and some of us thought it might go on.

The *dramatis personae* settled down to three out of four, made up of Kenneth Williams, Derek Nimmo, Peter Jones and me. A woman was added partly so that listeners could identify a female voice, mostly so that Kenneth could say, "I don't think we should have women on this show", a phrase which achieved joyous reaction every time Aimi Macdonald, Sheila Hancock, June Whitfield or whoever challenged him.

Kenneth Williams had his own clique of supporters. They occupied the front of the queue that formed outside the studio for hours before the doors opened, sat in the second row and applauded every remark, every comic gesture. For Kenneth the studio audience of a few hundred was infinitely more important than the millions of listeners.

Nicholas Parsons was our chairman. He had starred in the *Arthur Haynes Show*. I had been at school with him, employed him in cabaret where I owned a night club in the Fifties. Nicholas is one of the great "straight" men in television and was eadearingly pompous sitting in governance of people who may be even brighter than he.

Just a Minute involved precisely that. Having to speak for one minute or "flooding", a panellist would begin "The Upper Volta has the lowest per annum rainfall in central Africa".

Another panellist would then buzz and say, "That is not true". Nicholas decided that calculating African rainfall was difficult; the question was best put to the audience. "All those who think Peter is right cheer – those against, boo

for Derek and do it oow." The audience had been unearthed by the BBC Ticket Unit, or perhaps they had come in to escape the rain. What they shouted was half-way between cheer and boo, and was so indecisive that the chairman had to decide.

We owe a great deal to our producers. They would record anything in 10 minutes over the required time, so that the worst of the irrelevant bits could be excised. Derek and I were our first director. The story goes that Hatch, a brilliant recruit from *Ofsted* and himself a writer and poet, former of numerous programmes was told after the first series of *Just a Minute* that it would not continue.

OK, said Hatch, neither will I. The BBC needed Hatch, thought his work excellent... so he and *Just a Minute* stayed, Hatch rising to the top of radio management before becoming head of the Consumers' Association.

Our next director was equally brilliant and the one after that was called back from retirement to control us. Then we had Jane, Sarah and Ann. Either they were excellent or else the programme has become so brilliant that anyone can do it.

When Kenneth Williams died, the BBC thought it wrong to designate a successor. Instead they introduced alternative comedians: Paul Merton, Jo Brand, Sandy Toksvig, Helen Lederer. In the end, they settled on Paul Merton with occasional alternatives. Meanwhile, Peter Jones, Derek Nimmo and I live on: a bit slower now, no longer as keen to buzz for a transgression. (The result of a correct challenge means getting the subject – having to earn your corn the hard way.)

For reasons not altogether clear to me, we owe record *Just a Minute* at studios around the country. On election day it was Glasgow. Parsons was debonair in a green blazer: when we were at school he was a year older than I; he is now officially seven years younger.

Derek Nimmo was always a man of gravitas and remains so – he has also found the secret of eternal hair or has an outstanding wig maker. He is immensely rich, but refers to his chateau as "my cottage in France", his mansion as "a pad in the country". His house in Kensington is "the flat".

The series that we are currently recording starts in July. "Do you think this will be the last?" I asked Nimmo on Thursday night. "You've been asking me that for 31 years", he replied.

CLEMENT
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Kenneth Williams
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of listeners

Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Wagner goes north

Opera: A real sense of occasion at Opera North's newly-opened production of *Tannhäuser* (above) at the Leeds Grand Theatre because it is the first production of Wagner's opera outside London for 20 years and the last under the baton of Paul Daniel before he's off to the ENO. The more unusual Dresden edition is used with Rodney Blumer's English translation. Renowned Wagnerians Jeffrey Lawton and Rita Cullis sing. 6.15pm 6/10/24 May; 5.15pm 17 May. Telephone: 0113 245 9351.

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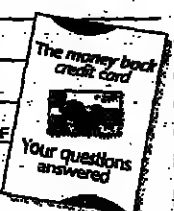
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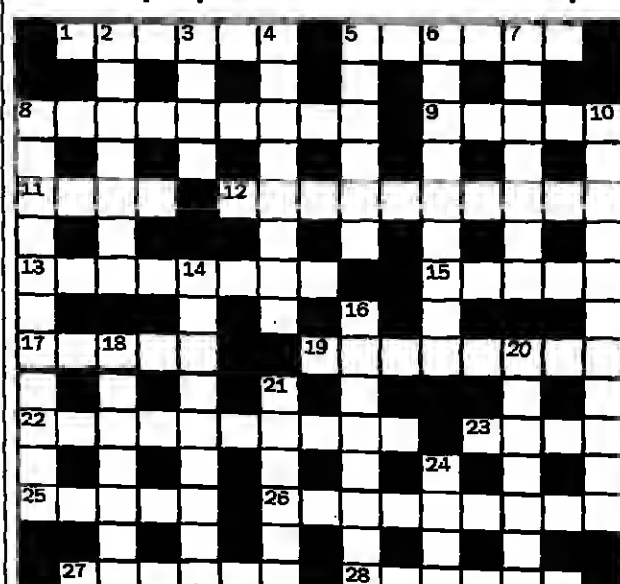
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3290 Monday 5 May

By Porfirio



- ACROSS**
- Gradually realise wrong done by family (4,2)
 - Criticise a course of action, say (6)
 - Remember about prayer meeting (9)
 - Liquid note? (5)
 - Tempt one to enter club (4)
 - Sounds real nasty being derogatory (10)
 - Disturb lessor (8)
 - Increase total turn over (3,2)
 - Be off Rex who's involved in fraud (5)
 - Composer of blues is crazy about one (8)
 - Share a place, by the sound of it (10)
 - River sport (4)
 - Present order for surgical instrument (5)
 - Roger's due to cook bird (3,6)

- Mean to grossly over-charge young beginner (6)
- Outstanding work of art? (6)
- DOWN
- Many queuing outside bank (7)
- Weight within the week 1 lost (4)
- Isn't necessary to goad two skinheads (8)
- Man is almost opposite (6)
- Mild season before Greek character turned up (9)
- US battle to secure treaty (7)
- Automatically approve of printer (6-5)
- Customers in mix-up get it wrong (11)
- Confess everything and emerge whiter than white (4,5)
- Litter is cause of complaint (3)
- Refuse to consider measure that's open ended (4-3)
- Frozen solid? (3-4)
- Lie about Frenchman being violent (6)
- Expressed unlimited degree of confidence (4)

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